

THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

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by

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## Introduction

All images are insufficient to speak of the great God of Christianity. No language can describe God, yet we must speak. We must preach and write and sing of God who has so captivated our minds and hearts. To best speak about God, we sort through our images and draw upon our pitiful language to find metaphors for God, always knowing that each is incomplete. The image, metaphor, symbol, or abstraction which speaks of God to one generation will not describe God adequately to another generation. We run into trouble with biblical images, because these are ones that we can not discard. They arise in our texts, or become lyrics in our hymns. They are best explained not discarded. This dissertation constructs a Biblical, historical, and linguistic explanation of the metaphor “right hand of God.”

The picture of God seated on a throne arises as a legitimate biblical image. Yet, we can safely say that the enthroned divine is an image that does not speak to our time. In the middle of the last century, Henry Emerson Fosdick included in his sermon these words, “This, I ask of you, to start with, that when I use the word ‘God’ you will not have in your imagination some human picture of him, like a king seated on a throne. Let us begin with something more realistic and indubitable than that!”<sup>1</sup> Why is God on a throne an unacceptable representation of the divine? First the anthropomorphic image is too limiting. God’s abilities are much broader than human beings’ physical abilities. The creator of the universe made the spectrum of light much broader than a human can see or detect, sound in decibels much higher and lower than a human can hear, and the remaining human senses are able to perceive only limited amounts of what is present in

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Why is God Silent While Evil Rages?” in *A Great Time to Be Alive; Sermons on Christianity in Wartime* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers 1944), 164.

the world and universe. Second, God seated on a heavenly throne gives us an image of a God far removed from our world. This is an image of an immobile God, whose distance and inactivity we would find far too transcendent to aid our world of turmoil, and tragedy. Third, a king's throne is an archaic symbol of power. Any single authority of our world, whether secular or ecclesiastic, shares power with parliaments, assemblies and congresses. Even though thrones still exist, they are rarely seen as positive symbols and are usually muted in some fashion. God enthroned is inadequate for our modern era that knows scientific facts about the universe that the ancients could not have comprehended and is inadequate in a time that denounces emperors and kings with their thrones as tyrannical.

If the enthroned God is a metaphorical image that is not useful today, it must have been very powerful in early Christianity. Many pieces of New Testament Scripture placed the resurrected Jesus Christ in a seated position at the right hand of God. Though the throne is not always mentioned, it is often implied by the seated position. Why was the image of Christ seated at the right hand of God such an important symbol to early Christians? Why do we call this Session of Christ his exaltation and glorification? To approach these questions and others, we will look at what “the right” meant in ancient and pre-biblical literature, in the sacred texts of Qumran, in the Hebrew Bible, and in the New Testament. We will look at figures, often “the Son of Man” seated at God’s right. We will look through the lens of Psalm 110, which is the Hebrew Bible text behind the New Testament passages of Christ seated at God’s right and the making of his enemies his footstool. The New Testament writings drew most heavily on the first and fourth verses of Psalm 110

1 “The Lord says to my lord:  
‘Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.’”

4 “The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
‘You are a priest for ever  
after the order of Melchizedek’”

## Chapter 1

### **Cultures of Influence on the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament**

In the Middle East gods of one nation were consistently adopted and worshiped in other lands. These foreign gods were introduced by soldiers, governors, traders, foreign spouses, and groups that migrated into another nation's territory looking for food or work. People all over the Mediterranean, Egypt, and Western Asia began the worship of new foreign gods. Often they equated a foreign god with one from their own nation, when the two gods had similar functions.<sup>2</sup> In other circumstances, one culture had a god with characteristics and a theology superior or more appealing than the god of an indigenous people. The people would take the characteristics of the foreign god and give them to their national god, excising the foreign god from their pantheon. These systems expanded the number of gods in a pantheon by adding foreign gods, identified the god of one culture with the god of another culture which both had the same function, or one culture merely adapted the characteristics of a foreign god to their own god.

### **Canaanite Literature and Iconography**

Baal is the most prominent god of the Ugaritic narrative poems. The ancient city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) was located a half mile inland from the Syrian coast and opposite the eastern tip of Cyprus. Ugarit flourished in the Late Bronze age and had its own language, which has been classified as Northwest Semitic. The Ugaritic language was similar to the Syria-Palestine languages of Aramaic, Hebrew, and Phoenicia and linked to these other Northwest Semitic languages by an ancient hypothetical precursor language.

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<sup>2</sup> James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 249. The Egyptian god Seth appeared to be one of the most conflated gods. An Egyptian-Hittite treaty in the time of Ramses II equated Seth to the storm god of Hatti. From the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty Baal-Shamaim corresponded to Seth.

Ugaritic texts were written in thirty cuneiform signs, each representing a consonant (except for three signs which represented the same consonant with three distinct vowels). The interchange between the two religions may have been probably oral, but the written texts of Ugarit give us the ability to compare them with the written texts of Israel.

The Ugaritic texts were precursors to the Hebrew Bible. Characteristics of poetry found in the Canaanite Mythology found at Ras Shamra can be found in Hebrew Poetry. The rather unusual parallelism of hand and right hand appeared both in the Ugaritic poetry and the canonical poetry of the Hebrew Bible. In the parallel of hand and right hand, “the hand” stood for the left hand. As in this passage from Judges 5, Jael must have held the tent peg in her left hand in order to strike it with the mallet held in her right hand:

“She put her hand to the tent peg  
and her right hand to the workmen’s mallet;  
she struck Sisera a blow.” (Judges 5:26)

By excluding the adjective for the left hand, it became a nondescript hand. It might be called only a hand. The right hand was accentuated by including the adjective. The right hand was believed to be the more powerful and forceful of the two hands. In the above passage, the left hand was stationary holding the peg, while the right hand yielded the mallet. The right hand was the hand that struck the blow that took the action that made it the forceful hand.

In the following verse of the “Baal Cycle”, Baal struck the messengers of Yamm. Baal had a weapon in both his left and right hand, two different weapons. Baal showed his aggression, that even the messengers of his enemy Yamm would not be received, but slain.

38 “The Prince Baal is shaken [He seize]s with his hand a striker,  
In his right hand a slayer,  
The lads he st[rikes].”<sup>3</sup>  
[8. CAT 1.2 Column II (CAT col. I) vs. 38]

In the following verses from the Baal cycle, hand and right hand are in parallel.

The verses described a routine life situation, an ordinary way of departing. These verses tell of Baal with the bow in his (left) hand, while the right hand holds the arrows:

“He (Baal) did take (his) bow in this hand and his arrows in his right hand; then he set his face toward the brink of Shamak teeming with wild oxen”<sup>4</sup> (15. CAT 1.10 Column II vs. 6-9).

In this section of poetry, Baal used the cedar tree in his right hand as a weapon.

By looking at the iconography of Baal found in the Louvre, Venel found that Baal held “tree lightning” in his hand.<sup>5</sup> This branch-like lightning may represent a visual idea of the text that reads “the cedar in his right hand.” “A New Kingdom Egyptian text states that ‘Baal smites thee with the cedar tree which is in his hand.’”<sup>6</sup> Baal presents a frightening picture. The highest places of the earth are shaking and Baal’s enemies go into hiding in the woods and the mountains.

37 “And Mightiest Baal speaks:  
‘O Enemies of Hadad, why do you quake?  
Why quake, O Weapon-wielders of the Warrior?’  
40 Baal eyes the East; His hand indeed shakes,  
41 With a cedar in his right hand.”<sup>7</sup> (10. CAT 1.4 Column VII vs. 37- 41)

<sup>3</sup> Simon B. Parker, ed. *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, “The Baal Cycle” trans. Mark Smith (Scholars Press; Society of Biblical Literature: 1997), 103.

<sup>4</sup> G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark: 1956), 117. When Simon Parker translates the poem (p. 183), he sees “Hadad” as a name for Baal not the god El. He translates “El” as the general word for god. He translates vs. 5 “Hadd, the god, in his palace”. I did not use his translation, because he translates the right hand as the other hand, which is not helpful to my purpose. The French translation also uses right hand for vs 7-8 in Andre Caquot, et als eds. *Textes Ougaritiques Tome I: Mythes et Legendes* (Paris: Les Editions Du Cerf, 1974), 283. “Il apris son arc dans sa main, ses dards dans sa droite,...”

<sup>5</sup> A. Venel, *L'iconographie du dieu l'orage* (Paris: Gabalda, 1965), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 340. Smith quoted from the Papyrus Leiden 345.

<sup>7</sup> Simon B. Parker, ed. “The Baal Cycle” trans. Mark Smith in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Scholars Press; Society of Biblical Literature: 1997), 137. Note 142 gives another translation for vs. 40-41 “Renfroe

In Psalm 21:8-9 we find the same parallel between hand and right hand, which described Yahweh's strength. Yahweh found his enemies with his right hand for the purpose of consuming them with fire. The Psalm is an ode to Yahweh's strength and power to deal with evil doers through their destruction: "We will sing and praise your power" is the final and summarizing verse of the Psalm (v. 13). The Psalm has much the same tone as the passage from the Baal Cycle in which Yahweh deals with undesirables by striking them dead.

"Your hand will find out all your enemies;  
your right hand will find out those who hate you.  
You will make them like a fiery furnace when you appear.  
The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath,  
And fire will consume them." (Psalm 21:8-9)

Psalm 74 is a lament against God's non-action when enemies have destroyed Yahweh's sanctuary on Mt. Zion with fire and scoffed at Yahweh's name. The Psalm contained Canaanite mythological references, so we should not be surprised that the Psalm contained a hand/right hand parallel. In verse 13 and 14 the author remembered the power of Yahweh who "broke the heads of the dragons" and "crushed the heads of Leviathan." The Leviathan of Psalm 74 has several heads. These phrases are modified references to Anat's, the warrior goddess who was Baal's sister and consort, and Baal's killing of the ancient dragon Lotan,<sup>8</sup> which became the biblical Leviathan: "When you (Baal) smote Lotan the ancient dragon, destroyed the crooked serpent, Shilyat with seven

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(1992:33-34) takes the unit as a bicolon, with 'eye' not as a verb but a noun serving as the feminine antecedent of the verb: "The Lord's eye is in front of his hand, When it speeds the cedar from this right." John Hastings Patton has seen hand and right hand as a parallel in vs. 40-41 in his book *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of the Psalms* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press: 1944), 39.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1973), 119-120. In Canaanite myth both Baal and Anat are said to have killed Yamm, and Lotan the dragon or serpent in different pieces of mythology. These inconsistencies in who killed the dragon in what place are not what make the myth have meaning. The underlying meaning of the myth was what held the importance. In these stories chaos, the dragon was dead and order prevailed.

heads” (CTU 5.1.1-2). We would expect to find a hand/right hand parallel in a Psalm which contained a section that alluded to the mythology of Baal, because Psalm 74 and other Psalms to Yahweh were composed by those who heard the songs to Baal and adapted their phraseology along with their mythology. The Psalmist lamented using the hand/right hand parallel in Psalm 74:11 “Why do you hold back your hand; why do you keep your right hand in your bosom?” The author asked why Yahweh did not rout the enemy with God’s powerful right hand. Yahweh is not presented here as a God of peace, but one who the author expected to kill the enemy. In Psalm 89, both elements of Psalm 74’s likeness to Canaanite hymns were found: first there was a hand/right hand parallel (v. 13) and secondly there is the allusion to Canaanite mythology in which Baal killed the dragon (v. 10). In Psalm 89:10, Yahweh crushed the dragon/serpent Rahab. The dragon takes the name Rahab as it does in Isaiah 51:9 and Job 9:13; 26:12; 38:8-9-11.

#### Right hand the place of honor in Canaan

Sitting at the right hand of Baal was an honor given to Kothar, the craftsman of the Ugaritic Pantheon. Kothar created the weapons that killed Yamm and was about to build a palace for Baal. Baal was a great host offering copious food and drink to Kothar.

44“Then Kothar wa-Hasis arrives;  
He sets an ox before him,  
A fatling right before him.  
46A throne is set up and he is seated,  
At the right hand of Mightiest Baal,  
48As [the gods] eat, drin[k].” (10.CAT 1.4 Column V vs. 44-48)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Simon B. Parker, ed., “The Baal Cycle” trans. Mark Smith in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997), 131.

## Canaanite Iconography

### El

El was the chief god of Canaan. He was depicted as seated upon his throne with this right hand raised in a gesture of benediction and peace. El was often found accompanied by Asherah, his consort.

Figure 1 and 2: These two deities were found as a couple in Ras Shamra. Schaeffer identified the male as the Canaanite god El and his consort Asherah. The Syrian couple are solid-cast figures. The seated El wears an Egyptian horned crown and a Syrian cloak Asherah stands in a Syrian cloak.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 3: The figure was found in Ras Shamra. The figure was originally entirely coated with sheets of precious metal, either gold or silver. The figure wears the Osiris crown and a broad collar. Though the figure has Egyptian dress, the pegs in its posterior and feet are non-Egyptian.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 4: This figure from Byblos has a Syrian pair of horns on his Egyptian crown. He sits on an elaborate lion pawed throne with a footstool. The figure may be El, but he lacks a beard. His left hand would have held a scepter.<sup>12</sup>

The gods Baal and Reshef (Resheph) were Canaanite gods. The cult of Reshef was brought to Egypt by migrating Asiatic people. Reshef gained prominence in Egypt during the New Kingdom when Amenophis II made Reshef his protector during military campaigns.<sup>13</sup> The iconography of the “Smiting Pharaoh” was known to have been depicted on the Narmer palette (3300-3100 BCE)<sup>14</sup>; this pose of the weapon raised in the right hand about to strike became associated with Reshef, most likely when Amenophis II adopted Reshef as his god of battle. In the Bible, Ephraim, son of Joseph, portrayed his Egyptian roots by naming one of his sons Reshef (1 Chr 7:25). In Habakkuk 3:6, the gods Reshef and Dabar were the retinue of the warrior Yahweh who was marching into

<sup>10</sup> Ora Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal* (Tel Aviv: Peli Printing Works, 1976), 114-116.

<sup>11</sup> Ora Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal* (Tel Aviv: Peli Printing Works, 1976), 46-49.

<sup>12</sup> Ora Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal* (Tel Aviv: Peli Printing Works, 1976), 46-49.

<sup>13</sup> Karl van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. van der Horst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 1326.

<sup>14</sup> Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 2 vols. (London and New York: Routledge 1997), 1:128-129.



Fig. 1

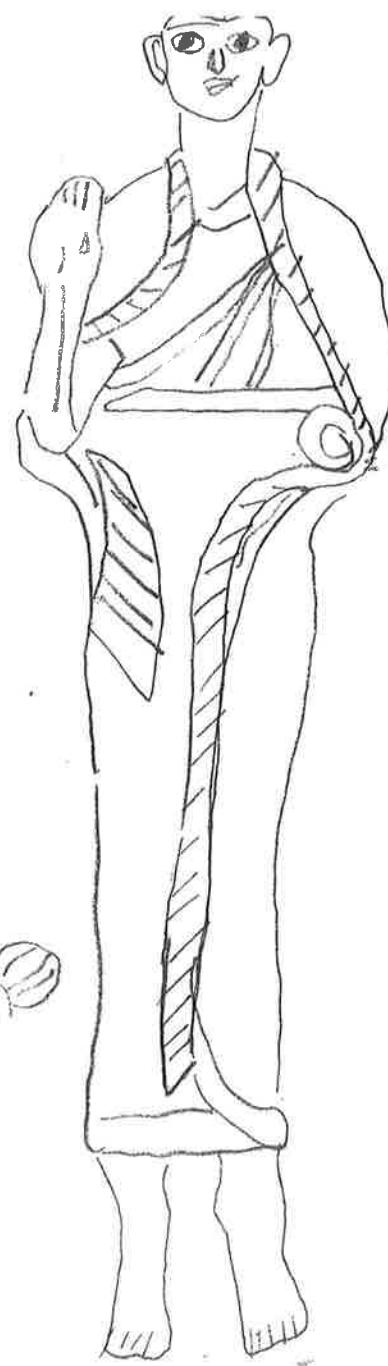
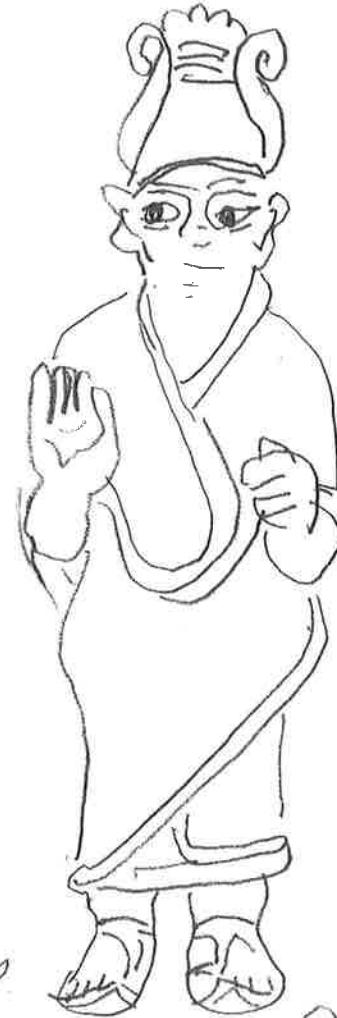


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



battle. Reshef and Dabar went ahead of Yahweh as a type of forward guard. These two were dropped as gods in the English translation, where they have become plague and pestilence.

Images of Baal and Reshef depict the fierce menacing quality of these two gods. They stand with their right hands raised. In the right hand is a weapon ready to strike their enemy. This depiction leaves little doubt that the gods are powerful and threatening. Their capacity to strike will not be held back. We can see how this Canaanite imagery translated into Hebrew theology of God's right hand. In the poetry of Israel, Yahweh's right hand brought victory. God marched with the troops and fought along with them to bring the defeat of the enemy. As early as the Song of the Sea, God was extolled for his powerful right hand: "Your right hand, O lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O lord shatters the enemy" (Exod 15:12).

Some of the images being studied have no inscription. The images are identified by known characteristics of Baal or Reshef from named images. Baal's eccentricities are horns on his helmet, a dagger worn in the front of his kilt, a hair lock, and his weapons, a sword or mace. Reshef's weapons included a mace, battle-axe, or undetermined weapon (called here a hand-weapon) in his right hand. He never carries a sword or spear in his right, but always a shield in his left hand. Egyptian art will show Baal and Reshef with a streamer on their headdresses, which denotes a foreign god, and tassels on their kilts, which is a Canaanite adornment. Egyptian reliefs and statues are often identified as the Egyptian weather god Seth but have the characteristics of Baal.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 143. "Although Baal and Seth are identified with each other in the New Kingdom (Stadelmann 1967 32ff and te Velde 1077 109ff), and the name Baal is always written with the determinative Seth animal, the iconography of these two gods is different."

## Baal

Figure 5: Stela of white limestone; Louvre, Paris; circa 1700-1400 B.C.E. The large stela with a rounded top was excavated at Ugarit. The large size (142cm) means that it was not owned by an individual but was part of the public worship of the Baal cult. The right hand is raised and holds a club or mace above the head. In the left hand is a spear described as tree lightening. A small human figure floats to the right of Baal. It is speculated that the small figure is the king who paid for the carving.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 6: From Ras Shamra, found 1961. The Baal figure with raised hand wears a short kilt with a border and tassels. The right hand is holding a spear.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 7: Now found at the University of Haifa. A bronze figure of Baal holds its raised right hand in a menacing way. On his head is a crown with carved horns set against the crown. Baal characteristically has a beard and dagger.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 8: Located now in Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotheque. The stela was purchased in Egypt. The winged figure thrusts downward with his right hand on this damaged limestone stela. He wears a headdress with the horns of a bull. The figure is identified as Seth, but he wears a Canaanite kilt. The figure might be identified as Baal-Seth for the kilt with tassels and the horns are Canaanite, while the wings are characteristic of Seth.<sup>19</sup>

## Reshef

Many of the images of the Canaanite god Reshef were found in Egypt. Characteristics representing Reshef are a weapon brandished in the right hand. The weapon is always a mace, mace-axe, or battle-axe. The weapon is never a sword, javelin or spear. The shield is held in Reshef's left hand, sometimes with a shield and spear held together. At times a lute is found slung over his arm.

Figure 9: Limestone stela; Oriental Institute, University of Chicago; c. 1300-1100 B.C.E. Bought in Memphis. The inscription identifies Reshef. The beard is not Egyptian; the beard is the thicker curved Asiatic type. In his right hand is the fenestrated battle-axe with two sockets or eyes. On his right arm some authorities have identified a small lute, while others see only tassels. The left hand holds a shield and a long spear.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 10: Limestone stela with traces of red paint on the figure; University College, London; c. 1300-1100 B.C.E. Purchased in the Delta. The inscription says

<sup>16</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 135-138.

<sup>17</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 138-139.

<sup>18</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 232-233.

<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 163-167.

<sup>20</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Fribourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 32-33.





Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

“Reshef, the great god”. The right hand brandishes a hand weapon. Its type can not be determined. The left hand holds a shield seen from the side with a spear. An Egyptian worshiper stands on the right side with his hands in the position to praise the god.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 11: This bronze is now found in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. It was found in Megiddo. The right hand of Reshef holds a club, which is attached to the crown. A shield in the form of a figure eight is held in the left hand to the figure’s side.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 12: Bronze, 11(h) x 5 (w) cm.; University of Haifa; c. 13<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Found in Sebaste (Samaria). The right hand of Reshef holds a club, in the menacing position over his head, while the left hand holds an oval shield. The barefoot figure wears a kilt and a conical helmet.<sup>23</sup>

### Egypt

From the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in (14<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) Baal was worshiped in Egypt. The Canaanite-Phoenician god Baal was equated with the Egyptian Seth,<sup>24</sup> both being gods of thunder and lightning. In Egypt the stone steles showed pictures with Semitic physical characteristics and dress of the god Baal, but named the god Seth in the stele’s inscription. Both Baal and Seth were weather gods, who functioned to bring needed rain for crop growth and to keep nature’s destructive forces such as hail and lightning from the land.

Though the gods Seth and Baal were often conflated in Egypt, they were worshiped separately as well. Each god had their own priests and temples. From the late eighteenth dynasty on, Baal had his own priesthood. The same Memphite family served as prophets of Baal and Astarte from the eighteenth to the twenty-second dynasty. An

<sup>21</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Firbourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Firbourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 130-131.

<sup>23</sup> Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal* (Firbourg, Switzerland, University Press: 1994), 131-133.

<sup>24</sup> W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1940), 160.

inscription gives us Pharaoh Ramses III's battle cry "like that of Baal in heaven."<sup>25</sup> The Pharaoh's bellow would be understood as the roar of thunder. Semitic gods present and prominent in Egyptian life clarified that the Egyptian and Canaanite culture influenced one another. Several reasons were responsible for the interaction of Egypt and Palestine. First, Egypt ruled Palestine during the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties with differing levels of actual power over the populous.<sup>26</sup> Egyptian troops and governors were stationed in different cities of Palestine as a constant presence and influence. Second, Semites were known to come and go from the delta region of Egypt for trade and shelter during periods of unrest and physical disaster. Third, during the rule of Ramses, "Apiru," a name believed to stand for Hebrews, were known to be mentioned in several texts as state slaves working on building projects.<sup>27</sup> The biblical text also records the Hebrews as slaves to the Egyptians in the book of Exodus. The Hebrews experienced the worship of Baal in all parts of the world in which they moved from Egypt to Canaan.

An Egyptian theodicy myth explained why there is evil and goodness in the world. The myth described that good and bad must be kept in equilibrium to make the cosmos harmonious. The importance for this writing is that the Egyptians felt that all that was good flowed from the right hand and all that was evil and disturbing from the left hand. The myth told of the clash between two divine brothers, although they were actually uncle and nephew. The text often refers to the two as brothers for they served in equal positions, yet always they stood in opposition to one another. The relationship of

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<sup>25</sup> James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 249.

<sup>26</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 116. The name "Canaan" was the Egyptian official name for the province or district overseen by Egyptian officials. The district included most of western Palestine, reaching to southern Syria, but not the Transjordan region.

<sup>27</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 114.

these two gods was similar to the parity, yet antagonism of brothers. Horus stood for the sky in the day time and Seth stood for the sky at night. Horus was the god of the northern division of Egypt and Seth the god of the southern. In the story Seth and Horus are vying for Osiris' throne. Horus and his mother Isis believe that Horus as the only child of Osiris must take his rightful place on the throne of his father. The two gods, Seth and Horus, were in opposition, day and night, north and south. Their opposition allowed the universe to be balance. If one god took preeminence by taking Osiris' throne, the harmony of the universe would no longer exist. The imbalance would occur both in the territory of the gods and terrestrially in the area of humanity.

Seth and Horus set up a contest to portray their strength and endurance in which they both turned themselves into hippopotami, but Isis intervened not allowing the contest to continue. There were more contests with Nine Gods watching as judges. They decided that Horus was in the right and Seth in the wrong. When they gave their judgment, Seth refused to accept it until he had an additional contest in which he believed he would prevail. The Nine Gods sent to Osiris in his distant kingdom of Tuat or the underworld for a final judgment. When they received Osiris' ruling, it placed his son upon the throne. Osiris' decision came with dire warnings that all the gods' power derived from him. Yet Seth had petitioned the gods for a final contest. The contest proceeded with Horus declared the winner and Seth taken prisoner by Isis. Isis asked Seth why he had refused the decision of the gods and had illegally taken the office of Osiris. Seth lied and said he had never taken the place of Osiris; as far as he was concerned it was Horus who should have his father's throne. Seth had capitulated. The

crowning began with the White Crown placed upon Horus' head and the office, king of Ta-mera (Egypt), passed to the son.

Ra Harakhti, the Supreme Sun, adopts Seth, who will live with Ra. Seth now became the weather god of thunder and lightning. The Nine Gods honored Horus by bowing down to the ground and celebrating with a heavenly feast. Seth never received any punishment for his wrongful usurpation of the power of Osiris. To have punished Seth would take the important balance from the universe. Instead both gods were elevated and given new positions.<sup>28</sup>

During the many years of Egyptian history several gods have replaced one another in a chronological list as the supreme creator god. All the following gods have been considered the supreme creator god at one time or another: Ra Harakhti, Neb-er-djer Ptah, and Osiris. Son of Osiris can also be seen as Son of Ra. Horus and Seth have been depicted as sons of Ra. Horus was the right hand and Seth was the left hand of the Supreme Being dispensing mercy from the right hand and vengeance and fury from the left. Egyptian iconography presented several images in which a Horus-Seth figure had the two heads of each god on one body. The head of Horus was on the right looking right and the head of Seth on the left looking left. They look away from each other as though their distain for one another still exists, though they are each part of one whole. In this ancient myth and iconography, the right hand dispensed mercy.

In Egyptian writing one hieroglyphic symbol is the hand. The hieroglyph of the hand has two meanings - action and benevolence. Though there is no distinction in the hieroglyph between the right and left hand, which would symbolically separate good

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<sup>28</sup> Alan W. Watts, *The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1963), 103-109.

actions from bad actions, Egyptians would understand the majority of actions as negative for action in Egypt constituted arduous labor under a blistering hot sun and in contrast benevolence as positive goodness. The hieroglyphic's two meanings specify the difficulty of labor and the goodness of benevolence.<sup>29</sup>

Passages in the Hebrew Bible also describe God as the source of all things, good and bad. Isaiah understood that monotheism was not truly possible unless all things came from God: "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create the darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord do all these things" (Isa 45:6b-7).<sup>30</sup> Another Hebrew Bible scripture which understood God as the source of good and evil is Lamentations 3:38 "Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?" Amos 3:6 believed also that as God was responsible for what is good, God also caused what was difficult and terrible for humanity: "Does disaster befall a city, unless Yahweh has done it?"

### Greece

Cultures over the world have looked at their environment and perceived duality: up and down, in and out, right and left, night and day, life and death, man and woman. Many cultures began to sort things dualistically. If where there was no natural way to make a division, cultures often made some arbitrary association that helped them to put things in one of two categories. Languages made this division by taking nouns, which described inherently neutral things, and sorting them into either masculine or feminine nouns based associations that made sense at some moment in time. The neutrality of

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<sup>29</sup> J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. Jack Sage (New York, Barnes and Nobles, 1995) 98

<sup>30</sup> Translation of Isaiah 45:7 is from the KJV.

human skin color became associated with favor or rejection based on an arbitrary association.

As religions developed, the sorting continued with opposites divided between sacred and profane. In Greece, this sorting into two categories was formalized with a list by Pythagoras. The sorting probably took place much before his era; he just wrote it down and punctuated its influence. In the basic category of sacred were strength, goodness, life, and in the division of profane were weakness, evil, death. On the sacred side were gods; on the profane were demons. Some of these associations became necessary for the health and well being of society. Life and death were a definite sacred/profane duality. To touch a corpse was associated with death and thus profane, but to abstain from contact with a dead body had the practical function of preventing the spread of disease, which gave life and was sacred.

Natural phenomena were not removed from the sacred/profane categorization. East became the most life giving direction, for the light of day came from the East. Therefore East was sacred, with most religious structures facing east. For the Hebrews to go to the left was to go north, and to the south was to go right. For the Greek, their orientation was to the north. To go left was to the west, while to go right was to the East. In general, the west was profane, for light dies there. In Greece, the right hand was associated with the East, which was the direction of the dawn, the morning's first light. In Israel, the Deuteronomistic writer claimed straight ahead toward the East was the correct path. One should not waver to the left or right. In Israel the right hand was still preferred for to go right was to go toward the warmth of the South. North was dark, cold, and profane. South had the warmth of life giving energy thus was sacred.

The earth was profane. When one died, the individual fell to the earth. Under the earth one decayed in the darkness of burial. From the sky came the light of the sun and rain, which gave life by quenching thirst. The sky was sacred.

In the Hebrew Bible, the authors of the Deuteronomist's History (writing in the post exilic period about 550 B. C.)<sup>31</sup> believed that the correct moral path of keeping God's Covenant was straight ahead. The Deuteronomist wrote to explain why Israel had gone into exile by repeatedly breaking God's Covenant. They taught that the People of God should never deviate from God's morality set down in the Laws by going either to the right or left (Deut 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 23:6; 2 Kgs 22:2). Throughout the Hebrew Bible, the right hand is the symbol of divine and human strength and power.

In the Hebrew Bible the material in the book of Ecclesiastes was written late. The author of Ecclesiastes had been influenced by Greek intellectual thought.<sup>32</sup> In Ecclesiastes, the right hand became the moral hand and the left the profane hand. This concept was found in Ecclesiastes 10:2 "The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of a fool to the left."

Right and left took on a sacred/profane duality in many cultures.<sup>33</sup> The qualities of strength and skill were associated with the right hand, but gradually all good things were

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<sup>31</sup> Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 374-375.

<sup>32</sup> Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 497. Eissfeldt cites the authors Sellin, Friedlander, Dornseiff, and Spinner who felt that the writing of Ecclesiastes was influenced by several Greek works including Archimedes' defense of Syracuse in their defeat by the Romans in 212 and the quarrel of Miltiades and ten generals before the battle of Marathon. Ecclesiastes could have been written no later than the last half of the third century B.C.E.

<sup>33</sup> Originally, there may have been a true health reason for this division. The right hand was used to feed one's self, while the left hand was unclean after wiping the waste from the body. Edward W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1908), 211, 150. "It is a rule with the Muslims to honour the right hand and foot above the left: to use the right hand for all honourable purposes; and the left for actions which though necessary, are unclean; to put on and take off the right shoe before the left; and to put the right foot first over the threshold of a door" (211). "When a foul is placed whole on the tray, both hands are generally required to separate the joints; or two persons, each using the right hand alone, perform this operation together; but some will do it very cleverly without assistance, and

associated with the right hand.<sup>34</sup> The right hand became the beautiful, moral, wise, just, and sacred hand through which good fortune happened. This development can be seen within ancient as well as modern language. In ancient Greek, the right held the original meaning of direction in opposition to left. Right became dexterous, then clever, or sharp of mind. Right was the direction of good fortune for the augurs. In Greece, an individual offered their right hand or their fortunate and best side to salute a friend and conclude an agreement.<sup>35</sup> “Right” in English means to be correct, just, lawful, and moral, such as right action. The French word for right is *droit*, which means right, straight, just, honest, and upright. *Droit* has come into English as “adroit” with the meaning dexterous, or skilled of mind. Left in French is *gauche*, with the additional meaning of clumsy, awkward, tactless, and warped. Right basically means all that is good, favorable, and legitimate. Left as in the Latin word *sinister*, means all that is weak, troubled, and threatening.

Aristotle cited the work of the Pythagoreans, who believed that the principles that underlie all things are the principles of mathematics. The most basic elements of numbers are odd and even. The Pythagoreans said that odd numbers are superior to even

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with a single hand. Many of the Arabs will not allow the left hand to touch food in any case (because used for unclean purposes) except when the right is maimed” (150). [I have moved the foot note of Lane’s book into the text by placing it in parentheses.] The above text is important, though it described Egypt during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, because it described customs in the Middle East that had been established for centuries.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham, (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960). Hertz discussed many societies in which the right hand took precedence over the left. To the Maori society of New Zealand, “the left is the profane side possessing no virtue other than, . . . certain disturbing and suspect powers.” The human right is the side of life, strength, and masculinity and the left side is the side of death, weakness, and femininity to the Maoris (100-102). The Hindus and the Celts for the purpose of blessing or consecrating go three times around whatever is within the sacred circle, always with their right side turned toward the inside to bless (104). The Muslim whirling dervishes collect blessings by holding their right hand palm upward toward heaven, while they discharge negative aspects of their life by holding their left hand down toward the earth (157 n. 43). Native Americans using sign language used the right hand as a symbol of “me,” while the left hand was a symbol of “others.” The right hand meant “bravery,” “power,” and “virility” when raised, while the right hand placed below the left hand meant “death,” “destruction,” or “burial” depending on the situation (103-104). In the tribes of the lower Niger women must use only the right hand in cooking or touching their husbands. The right hand is the hand of goodness, and the left the hand of death and sorcery (107).

<sup>35</sup> H. G. Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 179.

numbers because odd numbers are unlimited, while even numbers are limited. Odd numbers are the most basic for when they are added together they make even numbers, therefore odd numbers make up even numbers. The Pythagoreans believed that the decad was a complete number and was “the whole essential nature of the numerical system.”<sup>36</sup> The Pythagoreans came up with ten principles of opposites. One of the contraries was a negative pole and the other a positive pole.

#### Pythagorean Principles - Ten Pairs of Contraries

1. Limit	Unlimited
2. Odd	Even
3. Unity	Plurality
4. Right	Left
5. Male	Female
6. Rest	Motion
7. Light	Darkness
8. Straight	Crooked
9. Good	Evil
10. Square	Oblong

The Greeks associated evil, dark, female,<sup>37</sup> crooked, left, and disunity as one side of negative contraries. These things which the Pythagoreans only associated together as negative items would later be said by Plutarch to be the names given to Evil by the Pythagoreans. This was a development in thought from mere association to the titles given to evil. On the positive side, the Pythagoreans associated good, straight, light, male, and right, which Plutarch later gave as names of God. All these contrasts were

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<sup>36</sup> Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), I. v. 1-7. Aristotle believed that the Pythagoreans forced things into the complete number ten. For instance they said there were ten heavenly bodies. They came up with nine (earth, sun, moon, five planets, and the sphere of the movement of the fixed stars). They needed to invent the tenth, which was the counter-earth, an invisible planet to the human eye which orbited around the sun always opposite the earth. Ten principles of pairs of contraries made up a convenient whole for the Pythagoreans. Aristotle also mentions Alemaeon of Croton who came up with unlimited pairs of opposites such as white and black, sweet and bitter, great and small, but also good and bad.

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, I: 8. "For the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, but it is without authority, and the child has, but it is immature." Aristotle and Plato both considered the female to be inferior to the male.

reducible to common principles which the Pythagoreans believed underlay the universe. Plutarch (48-125 A.D.) writing about the Pythagoreans said “The Pythagoreans have a whole string of names they apply to the Good [Aristotelian name for God], ‘the One,’ ‘the Definite, ‘the Abiding,’ ‘the Straight,’ ‘the Odd,’ ‘the Square,’ ‘the Equal,’ ‘the Right-hand,’ ‘the Shining’; whereas Evil is ‘the Dyad,’ ‘the Indefinite,’ ‘the Flowing,’ ‘the Bent,’ ‘the Even,’ ‘the Oblong,’ ‘the Unequal,’ ‘the Left-hand,’ ‘the Dark.’ They take, that is, these two opposites to be the origin of the world-process.”<sup>38</sup>

In *Laws* Plato (427-347 B.C.) used the Pythagorean system when talking about worship: “After the honors paid to the Olympians and the gods who keep the State—we should assign the Even and the Left as their honors to the gods of the under-world, we would be aiming most straight at the mark of piety as also assigning to the former gods the things superior, the opposites of these.”<sup>39</sup> The symbolism for chthonic gods was “left” and “even,” that was used to show their inferiority. The chthonic gods, who ruled the dead had powers which only brought trouble and peril. An individual sacrificed to them in order that their negative powers would be deflected from the person and his family. Sacrifice to the heavenly gods was made with white cattle or sheep, but to the underworld gods one used black animals for the sacrifice.<sup>40</sup> These different sacrifices used the Pythagorean contrasts between light associated with good and dark associated with evil. What one did to please the Olympian gods was reversed, when sacrificing to the chthonic gods. One used the left (hand) and even (numbers of items) when sacrificing to the subterranean gods. The underworld deities must be appeased in order

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<sup>38</sup> Plutarch, *Concerning Isis and Osiris*, quoted in Edwyn Bevan, *Later Greek Religion* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927), 137.

<sup>39</sup> Plato, *Laws*, trans. R. G. Bury, (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), I.4.717.

<sup>40</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 200.

that the bad influences in one's life would be banished, but only after having given to the superior gods, the Olympians with the good "right" hand and the "odd" numbers of sacrificial items. The dark sacrificial animals and the left hand were used for the gods of death and decay, while white animals and the right hand were used for the heavenly gods, who were responsible for life and good gifts. Another word taken from Pythagorean list of contraries in Plato's passage of *Laws* was "straight" piety, which meant the good, correct type of worship given to the gods. A person would not want crooked religious practices. The passages in Plato and Plutarch with about 400 years in between the two writings show the hold that these contraries of the Pythagoreans had on the Greek culture

For the Greeks, the right connoted what was honorable or auspicious. A flight of birds on one's right side forecasts good tidings. In the *Odyssey* as Telemachus spoke "a bird flew by on the right, an eagle, bearing in his talons a great, a white goose, a tame fowl from the yard, and men and women followed shouting. But the eagle drew near to them, and darted off to the right in front of the horses; and they were glad as they saw it, and the hearts in the breasts of all were cheered."<sup>41</sup>

In Roman culture, what was on the left was auspicious, which appeared to be in opposition to Greek thought. An army or an individual considered birds flying to their left as a good omen for a future undertaking. Plutarch explained that this did not make sense for the left was regarded as the weaker side, but if one considered that the terrestrial and heavenly realms were antithetical, things sent by the gods on their right side would be to the left as they descended to the earthly plane.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey* XV 160-166.

<sup>42</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1969), IV.78.282.

In the Greek and Roman cultures a ring originally of iron and later of gold was worn on the third finger of the left hand to ward off the forces of distress, and temptation that enter from the weak, vulnerable left side. The metal was the substance that stopped the negative influences from entering the body. If the ring was engraved, the power to ward off evil was enhanced. The third finger of the left hand has been named the finger “without a name,” “the doctor”, and in Welsh “the charm finger.”<sup>43</sup>

The Olympic gods and goddesses of Greece were anthropomorphic in physical form and personality, yet they were physically much larger than humans. The gods and goddesses were able to diminish their size to appear as humans or to change their shape to appear as animals. The gods could rage and suffer, but their true distinction from humanity was their immortality.<sup>44</sup> Zeus won his position as king by leading the other gods in a victorious war against the Titans. “He is seen by the Greeks in two images: as the boldly striding warrior who swings the thunderbolt in his raised right hand, and as the figure enthroned with scepter in hand.”<sup>45</sup> Like Zeus, the Hebrew Bible also saw Yahweh as the divine warrior, along with his role as king. The depiction of Yahweh as the divine warrior that marches with Israel into battle and returns to be seated on the Ark was seen especially in early poetry of the Davidic and Solomonic monarchy and returned in the writings of the prophets. Cross described Psalm 24:7-10 by saying “It is the Divine Warrior, ‘Yahweh mighty and valiant, Yahweh the Warrior, and Yahweh šebā’ōt.’ The procession of the Ark marks the going forth of the Divine Warrior to battle and his return

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<sup>43</sup> Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham, (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960), 101, 157 n. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 183, 188.

<sup>45</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 127.

to his royal seat.”<sup>46</sup> Many examples of the enthroned Yahweh can be found in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 6:1; Ezek 1:26; Pss 9: 7; 11:44; 103:19).

Zeus’ portrayal was as king enthroned, but he shared this portrayal with his wife Hera, the queen of the Greek gods. She was honored by the earliest and most significant of the temples. Her image sat enthroned in Olympia, where she received her temple long before Zeus. The statue of Zeus as a warrior stood to the side of the enthroned Hera with scepter in hand. Hera shared power with Zeus for she sits with Zeus upon his throne (ὁμοθρόνου)<sup>47</sup> and holds the royal scepter. She was wife and natural sister of Zeus, and the eldest daughter of Kronos. Though Zeus had many other liaisons, Hera alone was queen.<sup>48</sup>

Greek knowledge of mathematics provided a stable reality by which the universe could be viewed. Eudoxos of Cnidos used geometry to draw a picture of the orbits of the planets as perfect circles. By observation, it was found that the planets’ orbits were not perfect circles. Yet an important leap forward had been achieved by understanding that the planets followed paths which could be described by mathematical equations.

“Mathematically exact movements are rational, thus the cosmos is rational, the cosmos then has a moving mind.”<sup>49</sup> The Babylonians had given the names of their gods to the planets. The Greeks followed this idea and now gave the planets the names of their gods. Their new knowledge allowed them to understand that the planets had souls and rational

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<sup>46</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1973), 94. Cross is comparing Psalm 24 with Canaanite Mythology, but Yahweh’s roles as divine warrior and king can be found in the weather god Zeus as well as the weather god Baal.

<sup>47</sup> Pindar, “XI.—For Aritagoras of Tendos” in *The Odes of Pindar*, ed E. H. Warmington (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1914), 429.

<sup>48</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 131-132.

<sup>49</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 326.

minds. Soul took on the definition, “that which moves itself.” The planets were seen as beings with mind and soul for they moved perpetually.<sup>50</sup>

Xenophanes (570-489 B.C.E.) was said by Aristotle to teach the unity of the highest principle.<sup>51</sup> He believed that the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod were only modeled after human beings: “But if cattle and horses had hands, and were able to paint with their hands, and to fashion such pictures as men do, then horses would pattern the forms of the gods after horses, and cows after cattle, giving them just such a shape as those which they find in themselves.”<sup>52</sup> He did not believe that God would do anything that was morally weak as the gods presented in Homer and Hesiod who continually did the immoral acts of adultery, stealing, and lying.<sup>53</sup> Xenophanes believed that God “... ever abides in the selfsame place without moving; nor is it fitting for him to move hither and thither, changing his place.” “But effortlessly he sets all things astir by the power of his mind alone.”<sup>54</sup>

Plato (427-347 B.C.E.) wrote that beyond the universe, their existed a craftsman god, *demiourgos*, who formed all that exists. This god was beyond description or contact by humans: “Now to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible.”<sup>55</sup> This god was good and desired that all creation be good and not evil. The Cosmos was

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<sup>50</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 326.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), L 7, 1072 3.

<sup>52</sup> Xenophanes B 15, cited in Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 47.

<sup>53</sup> Xenophanes B 11, B 12 cited in Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 47.

<sup>54</sup> Xenophanes B 25 cited in Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 45.

<sup>55</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 28 C.

understood by Plato to be a god in the shape of a perfect sphere.<sup>56</sup> The Cosmos had no need for eyes, or ears for there was nothing beyond the Cosmos of material existence to see or hear. “Hands, too, He thought He ought not to attach unto it uselessly, seeing they were not required either for grasping or repelling anyone nor yet feet nor any instrument of locomotion whatsoever.”<sup>57</sup> The Cosmos had the body of a sphere, which provided a new body shape for a god. “This Cosmos has verily come into existence as a Living Creature endowed with soul and reason owing to the providence of God.”<sup>58</sup> All was fashioned by the creator, who was unconditionally good.<sup>59</sup> The craftsman was mind alone and sat beyond what was visible, where no light or sound or time existed. In Plato the gods of Greek mythology exist, but to follow them is doing what is customary. Plato does not associate the star gods with the Olympic gods, but the Stoics developed this relationship in detail: Zeus is the sky, Apollo is the sun, Artemis is the moon, and Demeter is the earth.<sup>60</sup>

The followers of Plato took his ideas in different directions. Xenocrates (394-314 B.C.E.) described the highest god that is beyond the star gods and the cosmic god as the unity, *monas*, which he also called Zeus. Xenocrates will develop the idea of daemons, which for Plato were messengers of the gods, as being below the moon and being of different natures. The daemons can be seriously evil spirits that bring disease, cause

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<sup>56</sup> Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, cited in Edwyn Bevan, *Later Greek Religion* (London: J.M. Dent, 1927) 40-41. Cicero wrote that Epicurus said “Regarding the form of the gods...the most beautiful, what arrangement of limbs, what conformation of lineaments, what figure, what appearance can be more beautiful than the human?...If the human figure surpasses the form of all other living beings, and a god is a living being, he must necessarily have that figure which is the most beautiful of all.” Cicero also wrote facetiously about Epicurus that “in the way very unlike his Attic countrymen—saying he cannot imagine what a spherical god who rolls round and round would be like! (Words put into the mouth of a Stoic.)”

<sup>57</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 33 B.

<sup>58</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 29 B.

<sup>59</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 29 E – 30 A.

<sup>60</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 328-329.

problems between individuals, make the ground unproductive for agriculture, and desire to kill. They accomplish their desires by influencing people to follow their dictates. This quickly answered the theodicy problem by having daemons as the root of evil.<sup>61</sup> Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) described what is beyond the world as having neither time nor space, “the heaven” has no “substantiality.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore what exists there is incorporeal and invisible. Aristotle believed that there was an unmoved mover that thought things into being.<sup>63</sup> Aristotle’s description of the being was “For the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and the essential actuality of God is life most good and eternal. We hold, then, that God is a living being, eternal most good; and therefore life and a continuous eternal existence belong to God; for that is what God is.”<sup>64</sup> God does not change. By Aristotle, God is also called the Good and “Mind” which “thinks itself, if it is that which is best; and its thinking is a thinking of thinking.”<sup>65</sup> For Aristotle God is an incorporeal eternal thinker, beyond time, space, and matter.

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<sup>61</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985), 332. The belief that evil spirits inhabit the area just above the earth carries into the New Testament (Rom 8:3; Eph 2:2; 6:12; 1 Pet 3:22).

<sup>62</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), XII.7.5.

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), XII.7.2.

<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), XII.7.9-10.

<sup>65</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1962), XII.9.3.

## Chapter 2

### Hebrew Bible

#### The Relationship Between Human Kings and Yahweh

Baal in his role as the ruler of the cosmos could either support or ruin human kings. In Ugarit, Assyria, Babylon, and Israel kings turned to the god of their kingdom or municipality to support them and confirm their leadership. A human king needed the patronage of his god. If divine patronage was denied, the king was doomed to destruction. In the stele of Baal now located in the Louvre, Baal's right hand is raised in an ominous position about to strike an enemy with a mace. Baal holds a bolt of tree-lightning in his left hand. A small figure of a human can be seen in front of Baal. This figure has been identified as the Ugaritic king.<sup>66</sup> Gods were believed to be huge in proportion to human beings, so the stele depicted the man as one fifth the size of Baal. M. Yon described the stele as portraying Baal's relationship with the Ugaritic king as the "patron and protector" of the human leader.<sup>67</sup> Baal's raised arm suggested that he is about to strike the king's enemy. Since the "Baal Cycle" was developed during the dynasty of Niqmaddu, the stele may picture the relationship between Baal and the dynasty of Niqmaddu.<sup>68</sup>

Hebrew Psalm 89 most closely described the relationship between the reign of the divinity and the reign of the human king. Yahweh and David mirrored the relationship

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<sup>66</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 106. Smith identifies four sources for the identification of the small figure in the stele as the Ugaritic king: H. L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible" in *Biblical Archaeologist* 8:21-58, P. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Abrams, 1980) 201, M. Yon "Baal et le roi" in *De l'Indus aux Balkans; Recueil à la mémoire de Jean Deshayes* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1981) 181, and P. Bordreuil, "Recherches Ougaritiques," in *Semitica* 40 (1982):21.

<sup>67</sup> M. Yon, "Baal et le roi" in *De l'Indus aux Balkans; Recueil à la mémoire de Jean Deshayes* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1981), 181

<sup>68</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 109.

between Baal and the Ugaritic king depicted on the stele in Psalm 89:23: “I [Yahweh] will crush his foes before him [David] and strike down those who hate him.” Psalm 89 used Canaanite myth to describe Yahweh’s empowerment of David. In the Psalm, Yahweh is the deity who has over come the waters (Yamm) taking the place of Baal in the Canaanite myth. Yahweh gives his control won over the waters to David: “And I shall set on Yamm his hand and the Rivers his right hand.” Psalm 89 contains both a parallel of hand with right hand and also contains Canaanite mythology, which means that Psalm 89 was likely patterned after a Canaanite hymn.

The important relationship between a god and the ruling earthly monarch was seen also in a Mari text in which the West Semitic Storm-god, Addu,<sup>69</sup> showed a close supportive role to Mari’s king. In a text Addu is asked to march at the side of Zimri-Lim: “March, Addu, at his left side.”<sup>70</sup> The god at the human’s left also meant that Zimri-Lim the king of Mari was at Addu’s right, which is the placement of the king in Psalm 110:1: “Yahweh says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’” The Hebrew Bible would never say God sat or marched at David’s left. The left hand was seen as the hand of deceit and betrayal.<sup>71</sup> The normal place for any human being would be to the right side of Yahweh. The Hebrew Bible always retained God’s glorious preeminence by seating others to his right or to the place where God honors the individual. The Bible would never say that Yahweh was at the monarch’s left. But the concept needed to be reversed at times to place Yahweh at the right of the monarch, or the monarch was now to the left of God. For two reasons God took the position at the

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<sup>69</sup> Addu is a different form of the name that is often given to Baal, Haddu.

<sup>70</sup> D. Charpin, “De la Joie à l’Orage.” in *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires* 1987 5:661 cited in Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 108.

<sup>71</sup> See later in this paper.

right. First, the author's of the Hebrew Bible found they would not use the term "left" in relationship to God. The left side and hand were openly declared as negative in the verse from Ecclesiastes 10:2: "The heart of the wise inclines to the right, and the heart of a fool to the left." The left side was the side of fools, liars, and the arrogant (Judg 3:21; 2 Sam 20:9-10). Humans could have these characteristics, but Yahweh could not. If Yahweh had none of those characteristics, God had no left side. Secondly, the right hand, arm, and side signified the power of Yahweh and also a human. In the Psalms, when God was found to be at the king's right hand, God was empowering the human for the defense of Israel (Pss 18:8, 110:5). Note Psalm 110:5, "The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath." This verse made it unclear whether God was acting through the king of Israel or God was actually the slayer of the foreign kings. The action of Yahweh has to be taken as a metaphor for the action of the king. The power of the prince to take lives was actually the power of Yahweh at work through the monarch. This is seen also in the second Isaiah passage: "Thus says the Lord to his anointed (Messiah), to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes" (Isa 45:1).

### **Yahweh's Development and Adaptation**

What is the history that takes us to the Davidic Kingdom, when Israel is melded from a loose confederation of tribes to a people? The Biblical portrait began in the Exodus, which is not necessarily the history of all the peoples that became known as Israelites, but it is a place to start. In the biblical story of the Exodus, the group fleeing Egypt were composed of a "mixed crowd" (Exod 12:38) also called a "rabble" (Num

11:4). The mixed crowd probably referred to slaves of Egyptian descent (Lev 24:10) that accompanied the fleeing Hebrews and Midianites serving as guides who joined them in route (Num 10:29-32). The wife of Moses was a Midianite. Caleb was identified as a Kenizzite, which was a tribe of Edom (Gen 36:11). The peoples of the Exodus were a varied lot, a rabble to use biblical terms, who would have worshiped a variety of gods and goddesses. The Exodus peoples represented many who did not derive from the family of Jacob. The group probably never represented all the twelve tribes who descended from Jacob, for there is evidence that some of the tribes never left Canaan.<sup>72</sup> We know also that the group of former slaves was much smaller than reported in the book of Numbers. The group of people that entered into Palestine from Egypt could be more accurately represented by a number in the thousands not the millions. The biblical number of six hundred thousand men at an age to be a combatant (Num 1:46; 26:51), along with their women and children, would have amounted to two million people moving through Sinai during the Exodus. A group this large would have been visible throughout the entire peninsula.<sup>73</sup> They could have easily defeated the Egyptian army by force of numbers. A census in the millions could only represent a much later time period, that of the monarchy, therefore the actual group in the Exodus was much smaller. This census of the monarchy represented all of the tribes in the settled land, not the tribes of the earlier date that fled Egypt. The tribes led by Moses embodied only a partial number of the tribal group and joined those already in the land.

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<sup>72</sup> Several scholars doubt that all the tribes migrated into Palestine from Egypt. Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 1:16. Von Rad wrote of a theory proposed by L Rost, in which only the “house of Joseph” migrated into Palestine with the tribes of Leah’s offspring already settled in Canaan. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, wrote that the tribes of Dan and Asher were once acclaimed as a people associated with sea (Judg 5:17). These clans were never close to the sea after the exodus. Though Dan was given a territory that reached to the Mediterranean they were not able to take the land by force and moved instead to the northern part of Galilee

<sup>73</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 133-134.

The biblical book of Joshua presented an account of the Hebrews taking the land through warfare, but this is a problematic account. First, how could untrained soldiers of the rabble go up against fortified cities and experienced armies? Secondly, Archeological evidence for Ai concluded that Ai lay destroyed and abandoned for about a thousand years in the time of the conquest about 1200 B.C. E.<sup>74</sup> Archeologists also have concluded that Gibeon had no occupants and Jericho was a small unwalled settlement<sup>75</sup> in the period of Joshua's leadership. Ai (Josh 8:24, 28) and Jericho (Josh 6:20-21, 24) could not have been destroyed by fire with all the inhabitants killed in a mass execution as the biblical description of Joshua has told us, for the cities did not exist in the correct time frame.

We can conclude that the warfare of Joshua did not take place as described.

Even if we take the account in Joshua as accurate, there are difficulties. The biblical book lays out a three pronged plan of attack. The area in which Joshua lived and worked was centered in Gilgal, the Jordan valley. He would first move against the central highlands taking Ai and joining with the Gibeonites. Secondly, Joshua moved against the Amorite league, destroying four cities, Jerusalem alone stood undisturbed. Lastly, he went to the north to defeat a confederacy of northern kings at Hazor. This would leave the cities of Jerusalem, Beth-shan, Dor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, along with the coastal region and Goshen untouched. The Deuteronomist wrote the statement, "So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland, from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon" (Jos 11:16-17). "For it was the Lord's doing to harden their

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<sup>74</sup> Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 2 vols. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 2:429.

<sup>75</sup> Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 2 vols. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 2:431.

hearts so, they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed, and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated” (11:20b). The Deuteronomist’s claim was far more sweeping than the actual events. They made a theological statement from a position far distant from the actual happenings, which stated what they wished to have been accomplished by Joshua at this time. The Deuteronomist would like to have seen the Canaanites wiped out, then there would not have been the intermingling of Canaanite religion with the worship of Yahweh, but the settlement of Israel was much more gradual. Gottwald wrote “To speak of Conquest fails to do justice to the many ways in which the Canaanites culturally conquered the Hebrews... It underplays the nonmilitary factors involved in the entrance of the Hebrews: their occupation of pastoral land unused by the Canaanites and their alliance and intermarriage with closely related groups in the land.”<sup>76</sup>

Archeologists have reported that numerous new settlements were found in central Palestine during the Late Bronze Age. These new villages were laid out by people who were knowledgeable in agricultural practices. A roving band of new comers to Israel could not have been experienced farmers. They would need to be taught agricultural skills. All housing in central Palestine at this time was of the Canaanite type. An archeologist would be unable to differentiate the house of an Israelite from a Canaanite, all houses were of an identical type during this period.<sup>77</sup> How then did this band of roving people settle into agricultural occupations and live in Canaanite housing? The evidence is not clear, but it is likely that the newcomers melded with relatives that never

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<sup>76</sup> Norman Gottwald, *A Light to the Nations: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 157-163

<sup>77</sup> Amelie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, 2 vols. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 2:432-437.

left Israel. They took on the ways of their cousins who lived as the culture of the region dictated or the ways of the Canaanite inhabitants who were never related.

Not only did the group led by Moses take up the culture of Canaan upon entering Palestine. The group that left Egypt was not a homogeneous representation of the family of Jacob. The group included Egyptians, Mideonites, and Kenizzites, with the Gibeonites joining them when the Hebrews came into the Transjordan. No matter how diligently Moses tried to form the rabble into the worshipers of Yahweh, the worship of other gods by this multi-ethnic group must have occurred, as we are told it did in the worship of the Golden Calf (Ex 32:1-6). In the period of the Judges, Israel was controlled by a number of surrounding nations (Judg 10:11-12) through military takeovers. The Israelites accepted the gods of their captors other than Yahweh (Judg 3:7, 6:35, 10:6). During his monarchy, David incorporated peoples of multi-ethnic heritage into Israel by conquering Ammon, Moab, Edom, Hamath, and Zobah. Each of these nations worshiped their gods. Israel's composition was multi-ethnic with each nation bringing the worship of their separate gods and goddesses. In the times when Israel was a captive of some other nation, the country was influenced by the pantheon of their overlords.

The one god, other than Yahweh, who held continual sway over Israel, was Baal. Baal continued as a presence in the life of the Hebrews whether in the land of Israel or Egypt. The Bible told of Baal's worship during most of the Old Testament period. Baal's temples (1 Kgs 16:32; 2 Kgs 10:21; 23:2-27; 11:18), his altars (Judg 6:25, 28:30-32; 1 Kgs 16:32; 2 Kgs 21:3), his cultic pillars (2 Kgs 16:32) and his priests (2 Kgs 11:18) remained within the boundaries of Israel and Judah. The Israelites probably

worshiped both Baal and Yahweh without open antagonism, until the decisive actions of Elijah for Yahweh against Baal.

The book of Judges would draw a different portrait until the book is examined more closely. Judges described the Israelites as aware that their worship of other gods resulted in the negative fortune of oppression by the nations surrounding Israel. This view of their actions was undoubtedly written into the account by the Deuteronomistic authors of the book through their hindsight. The formula in Judges “And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh” has been recognized as an addition by the Deuteronomist. The only other narrative in Judges that would present a strong division between the worship of Yahweh as life giving and the worship of Baal as devastation for Israel was Gideon’s tearing down his father’s Baal altar. Gideon’s narrative (Judg 6:11-32) has been broken into two pieces resulting from different sources (Judg 6:11-24 and 6:25-32), with the last piece (Judg 6:25-32) arising in a later time period. Only in the later piece does Gideon openly struggle against Baal. Aage Bentzen wrote that “a section like 6:25-34 … clearly points to a period, characterized by an especially acute contest with Baal-worship, presumably the time of Elijah.”<sup>78</sup>

In the time of the Judges, the unification of the tribes into a confederacy was never accomplished. Each tribe was influenced by the local shrines of the established Canaanite gods. At Shechem, the god “Baal of the covenant” (Judg 9:4) was worshiped; at Beersheba, El Olam (Gen 21:33) was worshiped with El Roi, “a god who manifests himself” (Gen 16:13) being worshiped in the south.<sup>79</sup> The god of Bethel took the name

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<sup>78</sup> Aage Benzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Copenhagen: Gads, 1948) 2:91.

<sup>79</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 1:21-22.

Bethel, who was still being worshiped at the time of the Elephantine papyri.<sup>80</sup> These shrines noted in the Bible would refer to “El” as the Canaanite god who fathered the pantheon of gods and goddesses and his son “Baal.” The “high places” sat next to the shrines. The Bible contains evidence that the majority of Israelites were comfortable with the worship of both Baal and Yahweh until the first real confrontation between the two religions by Elijah.

During the monarchy, the worship of Baal was shown toleration. Samuel sent Saul to a high place after Saul’s anointment, where he would become frenzied with the Spirit of the Lord (1 Sam 10:1-8). The great high place at Gibeon held principle importance to both David and Solomon. This high place was associated with Yahweh, for there David had left the tabernacle and altar for burnt offerings that Moses had used in the wilderness (1 Chr 21:29). Solomon received the gift of wisdom from God while at the tabernacle of the high place of Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:3-9). Yet, the “high places” were associated with Canaanite worship and would be destroyed by future kings such as Josiah (2 Kgs 23:8). Both Saul and David had sons with Baal in their name, which denoted that they or their family worshiped Baal. Saul’s son was named Eshbaal, meaning a man of Baal. David named one of his sons Beeliada, meaning Baal knows (1 Chr 14:7). Eshbaal (1 Chr 8:3) would become Ishbosheth (2 Sam 2: 8-10) and Beeliada would be renamed Eliada (2 Sam 5:16) by the Deuteronomist authors to disguise Saul and David’s toleration of Baal worshipers within their families. Solomon built the Jerusalem temple to Yahweh

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<sup>80</sup> John Day, *God's conflict with the dragon and the sea: echoes of a Canaanite myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 166. Also found in Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:21.

but used architects and religious symbolism<sup>81</sup> from Phoenicia (1 Kgs 7:13-14). Solomon would go further than to use the Phoenician religious ideas for the worship of Yahweh: he would openly worship Chemosh, Astarte, and Milcom (1 Kgs 11:33). Frank Eakin wrote “the period of the united monarchy was characterized by an absence of hostility between Yahwism and Baalism.”<sup>82</sup> People worshiped both Baal and Yahweh with no conviction that the worship of dual gods was a grave offense against Yahweh, the jealous God. This conviction arose much later and was not clearly attested to until the Omri dynasty by Elijah.

When Solomon’s empire was divided into two kingdoms, Jeroboam I set up two shrines to Yahweh at Dan and Bethel each containing a golden calf. The bull was generally considered the symbol of Baal,<sup>83</sup> but the images produced by Jeroboam were calves, young bulls. The city of Dan had been called Laish before the arrival of the Danites. Laish had a relationship with Phoenicia: “the people who were there living securely, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing on earth” (Judg 18:7, 28). Laish may have been a colony of Phoenicians. After the city was taken by warfare or immigration and renamed Dan, the relationship established with

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<sup>81</sup> W. F. Albright, *Archeology and the Religions of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953), 148-155. The basin of water was called “the sea” (yam), not river or another designation for water. In the Phoenician Mythology, Baal fought to overcome Yam in order to become king. The sea would be the means by which the Phoenicians made their living. They needed a tranquil Mediterranean Sea, but Israel was an inland country with little dependence on the sea. Israel would probably never use a depiction of the sea in a prominent place outside their temple, if the architect had not placed it there. The Sea sat upon 12 bulls. The bull is associated with Baal or El. Three layers made up the altar, each layer decreasing two cubits in size. The first layer or foundation platform was called the “bosom of the earth” or “bosom of the underworld.” The four- horned altar at the top of the structure was called the “mountain of God.” The three layers depicted the cosmic structure of the underworld, earth, and the mountain of God. Baal’s mountain was known to be Mount Zaphon (North). Yahweh’s dwelling place was Mount Zion in the North (Ps. 48: 1, Isa. 14:13 “on the heights of Zaphon”), but Zion is not to the north. Mount Zion stood in a central location.

<sup>82</sup> Frank E. Eakin, Jr., “Yahwism and Baalism before the Exile” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1964): 407-414.

<sup>83</sup> John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 164. The cult animal of Baal is the bull. Baal has been depicted with bull’s horns on his helmet.

Phoenicia continued with the population of Dan. In the song of Debrah, she asks why the tribe of Dan had an affiliation with the Phoenicians, who were experienced seafarers, by singing “and Dan, why did he abide with the (the people of) ships?” (Judg 5:17). The text in Genesis 49:16, “Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel” is a strange statement unless the tribe of Dan was not part of the original Israelite heritage, but an outside group seeking recognition over a period of time by adopting the ways and God of the tribes of Israel. The tribe of Dan may have originated from a group of sea peoples called the Denyen, Danaoi, or the Danuna. They may have been a group of sea peoples looking for a place to settle “for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had been allotted to them” (Judg 18:1).<sup>84</sup>

The city Dan (Laish) with its surrounding area sits in the flood plain of streams that gush forth in the spring from the melting snow of Mount Herman. This is an area lush with vegetation and wild life. A text found at Ugarit appears to connect Baal with this marshy region north of Lake Hulah. The streams of the marshy area converge into Lake Hulah. In the text found at Ugarit Col II 9:12 Baal and the goddess Anat come to *ah šmk*. “The word *ah* is the same as Hebrew ‘āhū ‘river bank.’” Viroulleaud<sup>85</sup> immediately identified *šmk* with Lake Hulah, which, as is well-known in Josephus was called *Lacus Semachonitis*<sup>86</sup> and in the Talmud is called *yammā(‘) desamkū*.<sup>87</sup> This then is likely the area where a young bull was born to Baal when he was given the throne of his kingdom (Col. III 12 -25). The marshy area with its streams and wealth of wild oxen, birds, and fish would naturally be symbolic of a place where the god of fertility would

<sup>84</sup> Flemming Friis Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1962) 84-84.

<sup>85</sup> Viroulleaud was the translator of the texts from Ugarit.

<sup>86</sup> Bell. Jud 3 10.7, 4 1.1

<sup>87</sup> Sited in Flemming Friis Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 81.

dwell, when on earth.<sup>88</sup> The Danites were themselves sea peoples or were closely associated with the Phoenician sea people whose pantheon of gods was ruled by El until the kingdom was passed to El's son Baal. The climax of the mythology of Ugarit came in Baal's accession to the throne. The enthronement may have taken place in the area of Laish. Before the Danites entered the area, the shrine of Laish would have been associated with the El pantheon, likely Baal, his sister/consort Anat, and the young calf born to Baal in this area. There may have been a conflation of Baal and Yahweh as the Danites assumed the shrine as their place of worship. Certainly Yahweh as a desert deity would need to take on the characteristics of a god that brought the rains and thus the vegetation that the sunshine and rains supported. The bible recorded that an idol made of cast metal was the center piece of the Danites' house of God as long as the house of God was at Shiloh (Judg 18:18, 31).<sup>89</sup> The metal idol would have been in the shrine possibly until Jeroboam replaced it with the golden bull. The characteristics of Baal were given to Yahweh. The bull symbol of Baal as a symbol of strength and fertility became the symbol of Yahweh certainly by the time of Jeroboam, if not before. Genesis 49:24 gives the name "Jacob's bull" to Yahweh, as Numbers 24:8 described Yahweh with "horns like a wild bull."

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<sup>88</sup> Flemming Friis Havidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 82-83. After the Hellenization of the Middle East in about the third century B.C. E., Pan had priests and a temple in the area just east at Bāniyās. Pan was now identified with or covered over the Semitic god of the place, Baal.

<sup>89</sup> W. L. Reed, "Shiloh" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, George A. Buttrick, ed. 4 vols. (Nashville; Abingdon, 1984), 4:329-330. The last biblical record of a shrine's existence at Shiloh was in 922 B.C.E. when the wife of Jeroboam visited the prophet Ahijah there (1 Kgs 14:2, 4). Psalm 78:60 spoke of God's abandonment of Shiloh and the destruction of the site, but no date is attached to this event. The shrine may have become the site of a fertility cult of the Canaanite type. The sons of Eli had lain with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting (1 Sam 2:22). The women serving in this capacity suggests the presence of Baal's fertility cult.

W. F. Albright explains that the calves of Dan and Bethel would be the vehicle upon which an invisible Yahweh would ride or as a platform for the standing invisible God.<sup>90</sup> Albright takes into consideration findings from excavations in the Middle East in his description of the golden calves as Yahweh's vehicle. The text describes calves of gold (1 Kgs 12:28) as images of worship not as pedestals. When Jeroboam unveiled the calves to Israel he used the words "Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." From the text one would assume that the images represented Yahweh. The calves had become a symbol of Yahweh for during the reign of Jeroboam protests were never made against the golden calves as images of Baal. Elijah, whose loyalty to Yahweh is unquestioned, never raised his voice to dispute their usage in the sanctuary of Yahweh during the reign of Ahab. The bulls probably represented a usage agreeable to the followers of Yahweh, even though the imagery may have been directly taken from the cult of Baal. Only at a later time were southern voices raised against the calves, perhaps in a polemic of south against north. Hosea spoke against the images. In Hosea's discourse he describes the calves as figures and not pedestals for an invisible God by declaring: "Your calf is rejected, O Samaria. My anger burns against them.... an artisan made it; it is not God" (Hos 8:5, 6b).

The worship of Baal took place in Israel and Judah during the divided monarchy, standing alongside the worship of Yahweh as a normal occurrence. During the reign of Ahab, we are told a remnant of only 7,000 Israelites had not bowed down to Baal (1Kgs 19:18). During the reign of Athaliah, the only queen to rule in Judah, she broke into the Jerusalem temple of Yahweh and used the utensils dedicated to Yahweh for the worship

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<sup>90</sup> William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1940), 228-230.

of Baal (2 Chr 24:7). The Old Testament recorded that the kings worshiped Baal along with Yahweh, so the people followed behind their monarchs worshiping the weather god as well. In the same chronological period, Ahaziah king of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 3:2) and Jehoshaphat king of Judah (1 Kgs 22:53) worshiped Baal along with Yahweh as had their fathers. The Bible recorded that rulers from Moses to the kings of Israel and Judah destroyed the material means of worshiping Baal and killed individuals of their number who worshiped Baal (Num 25:5; Judg 6:25-30; 2 Kgs 10:18-27; 11:18; 23:4-5; 2 Chr 23:17; 34:4-7). Yet, there was probably no time when Baal was not worshiped in Israel and Judah. The repeated need for monarchs to suppress and wipe out the Baal cult in their midst speaks to the hold it had on the people and many of the royal family.

This intimate acquaintance of the people with the worship of the Canaanite pantheon influenced the worship of Yahweh. The three main festivals, Mazzoth, the feast of weeks and the festival of tabernacles (also called the feast of ingathering in Exod 23:16) were essentially agrarian, celebrating the harvest of wheat, barley, and grapes respectively. These agrarian festivals would naturally be in thankfulness for a good harvest to Baal, the god of rain, wind, clouds, and the sunshine. The songs that accompanied these festivals became part of Yahweh's worship.<sup>91</sup> These contain references to Yahweh's enthronement. Entire Psalms written to Baal became rewritten to Yahweh. Psalm 29's designation as a text taken from Canaanite origins can be seen in its setting of Lebanon (Phoenicia) and Siryon (part of modern Syria) in v. 6.<sup>92</sup> "The voice of

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<sup>91</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 1:24. Also found in W. R. Albright, *Archeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press) 128-129. Albright lists Psalms 18 (2 Sam 22), 29, 45 and 68 as Canaanite Psalms from the 10 century. Psalms 88 and 89 "swarm with Canaanisms." Canaanite parallels can be found in the Song of Deborah and the lament of David over Saul and Jonathan. The parallels stop with the prophetic utterances of the eighth century and begin again in the seventh century.

<sup>92</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 348.

Yahweh is upon the waters, the God of glory thunders” are parallels within v. 3 to speak of the thundering voice of Yahweh, but thunder was long attributed to the voice of Baal. Yahweh’s voice comes also with flashes of lightning, depicted as flashes of fire in Ps 29:7. Lightning is the principal weapon of Baal when he fights Yamm, but it comes from his hand as though Baal had lightning bolts sent as missiles from his hands (CTA 1.2 IV, 21). In verse 10 of Psalm 29, “Yahweh sits enthroned over the flood; Yahweh sits enthroned as king forever,” which is reminiscent of Baal’s enthronement after his defeat of Yamm, the chaotic waters (CTU 1.2 IV, 32-33). The same theme of the conflict of Baal over the chaotic water-currents in which he has vanquished Yamm and has taken his reign can be seen in Psalm 93. Yahweh is king. The floods lifted their mighty roar (v. 3), but Yahweh is more majestic than the waters and asserts his kingship over them (v. 4). The parallels in Psalm 93 with the language, and grammar of the Ugaritic texts place it in the early Monarchy,<sup>93</sup> which exemplifies the recasting of the worship of Baal into the worship of Yahweh by monarchs such as Solomon, who also used symbolism and architecture of Phoenicia to build his temple.

The idea of Yahweh as king arose with the exposure of the people of Israel to the Canaanite religion in which Baal and El ruled over the lesser gods.<sup>94</sup> Only with a pantheon would there be a need for an individual to take precedence over others. The idea that Yahweh sits enthroned in the high heaven with holy beings around him who comprise a divine council (1Kgs 22:19-24; Pss 82; 89:7; Isa 6:3) is a new belief for Israel, which must have been transferred to Yahweh from Canaanite mythology. The fact

<sup>93</sup> John Gray, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 46-47.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 103. El named Baal king for proving his superiority in his overcoming and killing Yamm. El retains his position as king of the gods with Baal serving El. Baal took a preeminent position over the earth and other gods with his investiture as king.

that Yahweh is God, means absolute authority over humankind, but God's reign is over other like creatures, the gods: "For Yahweh is a great god, a king above all gods" (Ps 95:3; cf. 96:4; 97:7, 9). The Old Testament contains scripture in which the divine council is explicitly mentioned. In Job 1:6 "the sons of God" gathered before Yahweh as the divine council. One of God's sons, Satan was given extraordinary powers of death and disease, which could only be described as godly authority. The "sons of God" found to make up the divine council in Job and in Psalm 29:1 was a direct parallel with the "sons of god" found in the divine assembly (CTU 3 E 45-46) of Canaanite mythology, who were El's seventy offspring. The whole traditional complex of Yahweh as the enthroned head of a group of beings obedient to him was borrowed by Israel from Canaanite mythology.

In Habakkuk 3, God sits not as king in the midst of his divine council but brings an entourage of lesser deities with him as he moves from Paran to the rescue of Israel. These gods do Yahweh's bidding, acting as his subordinates under his power. In Hab 3:5<sup>95</sup> the lesser deities of Reshef and Deber went before Yahweh, the divine warrior. In Psalm 78:48,<sup>96</sup> the same gods, Reshef (though a plural) and Deber attack the cattle on Yahweh's command. The biblical translation of the names of these deities has been demythologized by making the personifications into natural forces. The translation also remains inconsistent with Reshef and Deber being translated as "pestilence" and "plague" in Habakkuk 3:5 (RSV and NIV) and translated as "hail" and "thunderbolts" in Psalm 78:48 (RSV and NIV). In Deuteronomy 32:24 the gods Reshef and Ketev are sent in

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<sup>95</sup> John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1985), 105-106.

<sup>96</sup> William Fulco, *The Canaanite God Reseph*, (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1976), 56-60. Deber and Reshef are "malevolent spirits accompanying God in his destructive wake.'

Yahweh's anger against the people of Israel as forces of pestilence and disease. The gods Reshef and Ketev originated as members of the Canaanite Pantheon, which were assimilated by the Israelites.

### Yahweh with a Physical Form

The people of Israel found little trouble with God embodied. Early writings using the Yahwist tradition believed God to have a bodily form. The physical human was created by God and did not come alive until God's own breath gave them life (Gen 2:7). From this understanding, humanity could claim that part of them was divine. In the later Priestly tradition, humanity was formed in the image of God (Gen 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6). God was not anthropomorphic, but humans were theomorphic. Using the Priestly scripture Genesis 1:26, the word for "image" meant foremost a physical image: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness." The term "image" *tselem* meant originally something cut out: As in Ezekiel 16:17, for example, male images were cut from metal, which meant the physical shape was formed. H. Wheeler Robinson claimed that the word also had a "figurative" meaning "denoting a 'semblance' as distinct from a reality (Ps 39:6, 63:20). Robinson found that the other term "likeness" *dmuth* "is that the bodily form of man was made after the pattern of the bodily form of God (the substance being different)." Robinson went on to claim that the entire human was similar to God:

No doubt, writers so late as those of the Priestly Code thought not only of man's bodily shape and erect posture as distinguishing him from the animals, but also of his obvious mental and spiritual differentiae from the animal world. But this was not expressed by the words 'image' and 'likeness' ...<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ellis L. Tiffany, *The Image of God in Creation* (Ridgecrest, Ca: The Interface Foundation, 1997), 120, citing H. Wheeler Robinson

The similarity between humanity and God referred to the entire human person.

Not only was the mind and spiritual being of the human like God's, but first and foremost the physical form was directly taken from the outward appearance of God. Psalm 8:5 [6 in the Hebrew] reflected that God endowed humanity not only body and spirit as God's *kabod*, glory and *hadar*, grace or majesty were given to humans, with their anthropogony a little lower than the Elohim, the gods themselves. Elohim was translated angels in the Greek, from which we get the English translation.

That God used his own likeness to make humanity was so prominent in Jewish thought that "the best representation of Yahweh was not an idol created by a human being but a human being created by Yahweh."<sup>98</sup> The prohibition against making an image of Yahweh (Exod 20:23) was so intensely carried out that a person could not be depicted in a synagogue for the human was the image of God.<sup>99</sup> Yahweh was different from human beings, for Yahweh was enormous (Mic 1:3-6; Ps 24:9; Isa 63:1; 66:1-6). In Micah 1:3-6, Yahweh "will come down and tread upon...the earth," flattening mountains and bursting the valleys. In Isaiah 66:1 God said "heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool." The fire and radiant light of Yahweh's glory far surpassed what glory was given to humans: "The appearance of the glory of the Yahweh was like a devouring fire" (Exod 24:17).

Ezekiel described God's body in a vision and also drew upon a storm god's theophany: "Stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming

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<sup>98</sup> Ellis L. Tiffany, *The Image of God in Creation* (Ridgecrest, Ca: The Interface Foundation, 1997), 121.

<sup>99</sup> Rabbi I. Epstein, ed., "Abodah Zarah 43a-b" in *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 211-215. "Ye shall not make me," which is rendered in note 7 of page 215 "And since man was made in God's image (Gen. I, 27) the reproduction of the human face is not allowed."

amber" (Ezek 1:4). The throne chariot appeared in the midst of the storm cloud with lightning flashing from the cloud. A northern wind would be from the direction of Mount Zaphon, Baal's mountain (storms seldom erupt from the north in Israel, but from the west and south coming off the Mediterranean Sea). Ezekiel wants the reader to draw an indefinite picture of Yahweh using the word "like." "Seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form" (Ezek 1:26). Ezekiel may have used the word "like" to present the indistinct quality of a vision or to highlight the greatness of God, which is completely superior to humanity. Yet, the God, which Ezekiel described, sat on the throne with his loins projecting down toward Ezekiel. God speaks and reaches down to Ezekiel with his hand to present a scroll, which Ezekiel is urged to consume. Ezekiel has described Yahweh with a human form. He gave details of the body as endowed with loins, hands, speech, and the ability to sit. Ezekiel depicted Yahweh with a human body. The difference in Yahweh's body would be the numinous quality of the body which radiates light and perhaps heat. Ezekiel described God's body as encircled by gleaming amber or fire.

The most human pictures of God came from the Yahwist source. In these passages also, God has a body. Yahweh walked in the garden, closed the door of the ark, and visited the tower of Babel. In Gen 2:4-3:24, Yahweh sculpted the first man from the dirt. God did not desire to return to the garden in the heat of the day for the heat would make God physically uncomfortable. Yahweh walked instead in the cool of the evening to talk with Adam and Eve face to face. The couple, upon hearing Yahweh's footsteps, concealed themselves, because they had eaten the apple and knew to be ashamed. A piece of the story appears to be missing, because after God made garments for Adam and

Eve, God spoke not to the humans but the other gods in Yahweh's council: "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen 3:22).<sup>100</sup> Yahweh spoke to those who are like God, but are never mentioned as being present. They have generally been named as God's council. Yahweh's speech implied that gods alone should be immortal; human beings as creatures should die. In the story of Noah (Gen 6:11-7:16), Yahweh showed true emotion as he was sick in heart grieving over the violent immorality of the humanity he had created. Only Noah, who was a righteous man, and his family would survive the flood that killed the rest of humankind. When all had been loaded into the ark, God closed the door with a handle to the outside. Upset again with humanity, Yahweh came down to earth to view the tower that rose to the heavens (Gen 11:1-9). God's spoke about the matter to the other gods, who though never mentioned served as Yahweh's council of advisors: "Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." These very human portraits of God who formed Adam with hands, walked, talked, and grieved were written by the earliest source, the Yahwist. The Yahwist represented Israel in its immaturity, but later writers and redactors would also describe Yahweh embodied. In Exodus 33:12-23 is some of the most remarkable information: not only can no one view Yahweh's face and live, but that Yahweh has a human form which God himself described having a face, hand, and back. God covered Moses with his hand until God has passed by Moses then Moses will only be able to see God's back. The face must be the only place in which God emanated forth God's essence, the only place God is truly God. In Deuteronomy (12:5, 11, 21) and the Deuteronomic history (1Kgs 8:16, 29) God is present

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in his name. According to the Priestly writers God's presence can be known on earth only in his glory (Exod 16:10; Lev. 9:44; Num 14:10). With time the writers moved further and further away from an immanent God who walked the earth and spoke face to face with humans.

The Elephantine Papyri came from a Jewish military colony in an island of the Nile from 496-399 B.C.E. The colony had its own Jewish temple. The written documents show that Yahweh, or Yahu as he was called by the colony, had a wife Anat-Yahu. Anat was Baal's consort and sister in the "Baal Cycle" of the Ugaritic texts, so a good deal of syncretism between the deities of Yahweh and Baal had occurred. Other gods, including Herem-Bethel, Ishum-Bethel, and Anat-Bethel, were worshipped on the island.<sup>101</sup> The Yahu worshiped in Elephantine would need to be embodied to take a wife. The other gods could have been Yahweh's council that advised and served the divine king.

Yahweh assumed Baal's title "cloud rider" (CTU 3 D 4 48-50) in Psalms 68:4 and 104:3 and Isaiah 19:1. God's moved through the heavens by riding the clouds and using the winds as his chariot (Pss 18:10;104:3). God is embodied in these early uses of Yahweh as Lord of the storm.

He bowed the heavens, and came down;  
thick darkness was under his feet.  
He rode on a cherub, and flew;  
he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind...  
The LORD also thundered in the heavens,  
and the Most High uttered his voice.  
And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them (Ps 18:9-10, 13-14a).

In later development, Yahweh was still present in the storm cloud, but he has become invisible to humanity as though the cloud enshrouded him. Yahweh led the

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<sup>101</sup> John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 166.

people out of Egypt through the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. These two pillars can be understood as the same cloud with the amount of light in day or night allowing for the different observable aspects of the cloud. Only the condensed water vapor or white substance of the cloud would be visible by day. Only the fire or lightning of the storm cloud would be perceptible by night. Exodus 14:24 noted both Yahweh's presence in the column and the column's dual nature of fire and cloud. Yahweh's storm cloud was associated with darkness. Frank Cross described the pillar of cloud as a "dark cloud," a storm cloud in Exodus 14:19. In this passage, both the Massoretic and Greek text is corrupted.<sup>102</sup> God looked out of the pillar of cloud and fire (Exod 14:24) and acted through the cloud as God "drove the sea back" (Exod 14:21) and "clogged the chariot wheels" of the Egyptian soldiers (Exod 14:25).

God's theophany in the Exodus came as a column of cloud (Exod 13:21-22; 14:19, 24). God's theophany at Sinai also came in a cloud, but the form or shape of the cloud has been altered. Yahweh's cloud that settled on Sinai became "a cloud bank" or "a dense cloud" (Exod 19:9), which pervades the mountain. In Exodus 19:16 'nn *kbd*, a heavy cloud was upon Mt. Sinai. Here the adjective *kbd* for what will become the noun *kabod*, glory was used in the relationship with the cloud of Yahweh. Though scholars agree that the adjective here means heavy or dense, it could also be used here to speak of the glory of Yahweh that had settled upon the mountain.<sup>103</sup> The cloud came with thunder and lightning, which defined the coming of Yahweh in association with the storm. The mountain was wrapped not only in a cloud but in smoke for Yahweh had come down in fire as a violent storm for the mountain shook. When Moses spoke to Yahweh, God

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<sup>102</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essay in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1973), 164.

<sup>103</sup> The adjective was used in Exod 29:43 and 1 Sam 4:21 to mean glorious.

answered in thunder (Exod 19:19). The Eloist source used the pillar of cloud when speaking of God's guidance and protection on the path away from Egypt, but the E source described a change in the cloud formation that enveloped Mt. Sinai. Here the cloud became a "cloud bank" (Exod 19:9) and a "heavy, glorious cloud" (Exod 19:16) and "darkness" (Ex 20:21) when speaking of Yahweh's presence on Mt. Sinai. Yahweh has purposefully wrapped himself in this darkness, a dark so thick that light barely penetrated. This darkness, though it described the darkness of a storm, probably did not occur in nature. This darkness was the product of divine initiative to hide himself or to provide a mysterious covering.<sup>104</sup> Solomon when dedicating the temple declared that God had chosen to dwell in this deep darkness (1 Kgs 8:12; 2 Chr 6:1). The Psalms described God as surrounded by this darkness and clouds (Pss 18:9; 97:2).<sup>105</sup> In Job 22:13, Elephaz chose to describe God as unable to see through the darkness that surrounded him to judge those upon the earth. The darkness of the word 'rpl was descriptive of Yahweh's presence at Sinai (Exod 20:21) or Mt. Horeb in the Deuteronomic writings (Deut 4:11; 5:22). The pillar of cloud would return as God met the people and Moses at the entrance of the tabernacle (Exod 33:9-10), but the cloud at the tent of meeting could also be an amorphous mass that filled the tent of meeting, so that Moses could not enter (Exod 40:34-38). All of these cloud portrayals of Yahweh point back to the storm god, who came with a voice of thunder in a profusion of lightning.

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<sup>104</sup> The word 'bl would be used by the prophets to describe the darkness that will come over the earth in the Day of the Lord (Ezek 30:3, 18; Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:15), which would be an unnatural darkness.

<sup>105</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essay in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1973), 165. Cross cited three places where this pairing of cloud and darkness in poetry and prose can be found Ezek 34:12, Psalm 97:2, and Job 38:9.

It is not clear when the heaviness of the clouds in the storm theophany became the *kābōd* or glory of God. The glory of God has the numinous quality that was derived initially from the fire or lightning of the storm's display. In the continuous section in Exodus that contains material on Yahweh's theophany on Sinai and in the tent of meeting, the progression of material from three or even more different sources can be seen. Looking at the storm, the first use of a word related to the noun *kābōd* came in the adjective that described the cloud that descended upon Mt. Sinai. The adjective was found in the phrase, '*nn kbd* or storm cloud, heavy cloud of the E source (Exod 19:16). This heavy cloud had lightning associated with it. God was said to have descended upon the mountain with fire (Exod 19:18). The Yahwistic tradition was extremely comfortable with God in a body. In the Sinai tradition of J, a very old section described Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders going up the mountain where they saw God, who refrained from touching the elders. The only way God was described was that his feet appeared to be upon a pavement of sapphire stones as though the human's perspective was looking upward at God's lower extremities. Moses and the elders ate and drank the sacrificial meal on the mountain, while beholding God (Exod 24:9-11). The Yahwistic tradition also had Moses ask to see the Lord's *kābōd*, which Frank Cross believed was Yahweh's "refulgent aureole surrounding or worn by the deity."<sup>106</sup> In Exodus 33:18 Moses asked to see God's glory, meaning God in the midst of the nimbus, the light that surrounded God's person. Moses was allowed to see the back of Yahweh's body. If one saw God's face, the person would die, perhaps because God's light was too bright. This represented a progression in ideas from the concepts of Exodus 24:9-11,

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<sup>106</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essay in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1973), 166.

where the elders were fully capable of seeing the God of Israel without any physical harm.

The word *kābōd* semantically meant “heaviness,” but developed to mean the number of things or wealth of a person that brought “power,” “glory,” and “honor.” The amount (the weightiness) of Jacob’s goods was his *kābōd*, which gave him power and honor in the community (Gen 31:1). By the time of Joseph, this high Egyptian official’s *kābōd* had become his honor (Gen 45:13). The word *kābōd* would continue to mean glory and honor in Old Testament usage. The glory of Yahweh became the hypostasis of God in the Priestly tradition. In Exodus 16:10 and 40:34-38, the Priestly editor has distinguished between the cloud and the glory of God, though the “glory of Yahweh” may have been used as an archaic form needed to patch the story of Mt. Sinai into a continuous whole.<sup>107</sup> God has given up speaking through thunder and spoke directly from the cloud in the Priestly tradition, but the association of God’s glory with light as fire is retained: “the glory of the Yahweh was like a devouring fire” (Exod 24:17).<sup>108</sup>

The Hebrew Bible portrays Yahweh anthropopathically with the full range of human emotions. God laughed at the wicked and the enemies of Israel (Pss. 2:4; 37:13; 59:8), showed rage and jealousy against unfaithful Israel (Ezek 16:42), yet God loved Israel (Deut 10:15). God was shown to go from burning anger to compassion with both emotions arising in his love of Israel: “In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your

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<sup>107</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essay in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1973), 153, 166. Moore called the Priestly use of “the glory of Yahweh” as “a harmonizing conflation of parallel traditions.”

<sup>108</sup> The same allusion to fire and light will be found in the Psalms. In Psalms 50:2-3, “God shines forth” and presents “before him a devouring fire.” In Psalm 104, God is “wrapped in light” vs. 2 and “flame” is God’s minister vs. 4. The storm theophany is found in Isaiah 29:6: “With thunder and earthquake and great noise...and the flame of a devouring fire.” The allusion to God as fire is present in Isaiah 30:27, 30; and 66:15.

Redeemer" (Isa 54:8). God's passions were more intense than human feelings. God loved, laughed, raged, was jealous, and compassionate on a divine level (Ps 18:7).

Also, God was portrayed anthropomorphically for God had a face (Ex. 30:20; Job 33:26), ears (Pss 18:6; 34:5), a mouth (Pss 18:9; 33:6; 119:72; Job 15:30; Isa 1:20; 34:16), eyes (Job 24:23; Jer 16:17; Prov 15:3), fingers (Ps 8:3), feet (Exod 25:26; Gen 33:14), and hands. Portraying these body portions stood for the totality of God, so that God with a form would not need to be drawn in word pictures. Also many of the body's parts stood for a quality of God as the face represented the divine presence. Yet each of these parts was human and gave God a human physicality.

A change in theological understanding took place in the speech of the classical Prophets. The Cult receded in importance for them with open criticism of sacrifices and festivals: "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" says the Lord. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts'" (Isa 1:11). "Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them" (v. 14 also, Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-24; Isa 1:10-17; Jer 7:9-22). The Prophets saw that the Israelites continued their sin unabated because sacrificing gave them the means of wiping away all their sin: "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are safe!'- only to go on doing all these abominations?" (Jer 7:9-11). The Cult represented the means by which the divine power was controlled for humans, but only if Yahweh was a God who needed to be sustained by eating these sacrifices. Instead Yahweh of the Prophets was everlasting, omnipresent, and the creator who needed

nothing from the created. The Prophets did not believe that Yahweh's forgiveness or love could be controlled by humans. The Prophets distained outward displays of one's piety through sacrifices and public prayer toward the inward emotional response to the love of God. The emphasis of the prophets was upon the disposition of one's heart and the moral behavior that results from true love of God: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isa 1:16-17). The idea that Israel could control God's behavior toward the people by their sacrifices was contemptuous to the prophets when the people continued their immorality.<sup>109</sup>

The God to whom the prophets turn is no longer a God in need of sustenance with a physical body. They professed that Yahweh was magnificent and everlasting (Isa 26:4; 40:28; Jer 10:10). God had no need for human gifts. God lived eternally without the humans Yahweh created. God's greatness encompassed the making of heaven, earth, and the giving of breath and spirit to humans (Isa 42:5; 45:12, 18). God does not faint or grow weary as the creature does (Isa 40:28). God fills heaven and earth, being everywhere (Jer 23:24). Yahweh had become a magnificent, omnipresent God, whose concern was the moral behavior of the Israelite people.

Though most of the prophetic messages from God appear to be auditory (Isa 5:9; 22:14; Jer 23:28; Amos 7:15), God was also seen in prophetic visions. The prophets seemed little concerned about the nature of Yahweh. Their interest was upon the announcements that they were to make about future events and about the emotions and passions that Yahweh felt toward the people of God. When Yahweh is seen by the

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<sup>109</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 368.

prophets, one would expect a report of what God looked like, what his voice sounded like, or how God approached the human, but instead the prophets reported little of the appearance of God. When Amos sees Yahweh holding a plumb-line to a wall, God asks what he saw. Amos said a plumb-line (Amos 7:7-8). Amos gave no report of the holder of the plumb line, as he gives no report of God's appearance at the altar (Amos 9:1).<sup>110</sup> Ezekiel gave the most detailed description of God seated upon his throne, but Ezekiel spoke of this vision as the “glory of Yahweh” and the glory was “a figure *like* that of a man.” Ezekiel’s account of his commissioning is similar to two other prophets, Micah ben Imlah (I Kgs 22:19) and Isaiah (Isa 6), as though there was a standard way of receiving the prophetic calling from God who sat upon his throne.<sup>111</sup> Yet these are quite different presentations of God upon his throne. Micah found God in heaven surrounded by the host of heaven. Ezekiel’s vision saw God in his throne chariot descending to the earth and rising up again. The beings that surrounded the chariot had four wings with four faces. Isaiah was within the temple when he saw God’s throne, where seraphs with six wings attended God, singing God’s holiness. To be in God’s presence was to feel God’s exalted holiness and the sinfulness of the prophet as well as Israel’s sinfulness.

### Yahweh as King, Enthroned

Until the texts from Ras Shamra were discovered, Baal was understood to have no claim as a cosmic deity. Each different mountain or shrine holding the name Baal was believed to have been dedicated to one of many different Baalim or nature gods. The

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<sup>110</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:59.

<sup>111</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., trans. D. M. G. Stalker (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965), 2:63-54.

Ugaritic texts revealed that the many shrines were dedicated to one god, whose name was Hadad with his appellative, Baal, becoming his proper name. After reading the texts, scholars became aware that Baal was indeed considered the deity who ruled the earth from his “heavenly” mountain. Not until the texts were recovered did scholars truly realize how much borrowing had occurred within the worship of Yahweh from Canaanite religion.

In the Ras Shamra Mythology, Baal has been promised a kingdom without end: “You shall take your eternal kingdom, your dominion for ever and ever.”<sup>112</sup> The words of Psalm 145:13 describe Yahweh’s eternal sovereignty in words similar to the claim made for Baal: “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.” God’s eternal sovereignty is found also in Exod 15:18, Ps 29:10, Ps 146:10, and Mic 4:7.

Monarchy: David’s kingdom was an artificial composition of highly diverse peoples with few commonalities of tradition, religion, or origin. Growth of the empire followed no pre-planned ideal, but grew by necessity of fighting those who threatened the security of the established kingdom. David successfully fought the Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6); Moabites (2 Sam: 8:2), Arameans of Zobah (2 Sam 8:3) and Damascus (2 Sam 8:5-8), the Ammonites as well as the Arameans of Beth-rehob, Maacah, and Tob (2 Sam 10-12). The Canaanite city states that the Judges were not able to overcome (Judg 1:28) were completely integrated into the empire by the time of David’s census (2 Sam 24). The tension that existed in David’s kingdom can be seen by the revolts that began in discontent. Absalom led a revolt (2 Sam 15-19) that began with his turning dissatisfaction with the dispensation of justice in the northern tribes to his advantage

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<sup>112</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) 322. KTU 1.2 IV 10

(2 Sam 15:1-6). A second uprising under Sheba, a Benjaminite, led the people of the north against David's forces with the cry – “We have no portion in David, no share in the son of Jesse! Everyone to your tents, O Israel!” (2 Sam 20:1). These insurrections showed that the north felt subjugated by David's rule and probably the tribe of Benjamin's anger at the loss of their tribesman Saul and his heirs.

David needed to unite the disparate groups in his empire. David began to bring the empire together with a new bureaucracy which contained a commander of the people's army plus a commander of the personal army of David (mostly mercenaries), a secretary, a recorder, a director of forced labor, a herald who often did the business of speaking for the king, a superintendent of the palace, and priests (2 Sam 8:17; 15:24-25). In David's inner cabinet were religious leaders. David began the process of cultivating a union of Canaanite and Israelite religion to overcome the division between the two peoples. Religion was the single most uniting force, because people lived or died depending upon the divine control of rain and war. Yahweh was the God by which David had overcome the other nations, but the customs of the vanquished would enhance the cult of Yahweh. The removal of the ark from its tribal setting to the new capitol was both a religious and political action. This action said clearly that power of religion and government resided in Jerusalem with the monarch David. The priests like the commanders of the armies were now government officials.<sup>113</sup>

Solomon sought further to centralize authority in the monarchy. David concentrated power in the new capital Jerusalem, but David was not able to build a house for Yahweh. Building the temple required huge financial and labor resources, which

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<sup>113</sup> John Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, *Israelite and Judean History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 262.

David used to fight his wars, without and within his empire. Whether it was God who stopped him as the Deuteronomist author wrote in the Oracle of Nathan (2 Samuel 7:5-6) or political pressure, David never built a temple for Yahweh. This meant the centralization of power in David's kingdom was limited,<sup>114</sup> for he never broke the power of the tribes. A significant power of the clans lay in their control to set festival dates, sacrificial rules, story content, and the god(s) worshipped at regional shrines and in the power of the diverse religions that lay in conquered territories. Solomon centralized religion in Jerusalem by building not just the temple, but the temple cult.

Building a temple for the god that kings of the Near East felt were responsible for their success in war was an expected next step after the completion of a great military campaign. The royal theology that developed in the time of Solomon depended partially upon the mythology of the lands that surrounded Israel. In this Assyrian cylinder, the god Ningirsu appeared in a dream to ask the human Gudea to build him a temple:

In the dream there was a man as gigantic as heaven, as gigantic as the earth. According to his head [horned crown] he was a god; according to his arms he was the “eagle;” according to his lower body he was a storm; on his right and left lions were standing. He commanded me to build his house (Cyl. B, Column IV 14-20).<sup>115</sup>

Gudea succeed in building Ningirsu's temple. In comparison David tried to do what he felt needed to be done, but Nathan stopped him in the Biblical report. David saw that his own house was far grander than Yahweh's tent and wished to build a quality temple for God, but Nathan spoke words that must have been devised during the Solomon era: “He

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<sup>114</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 240-258.

<sup>115</sup> Adam Falkenstein and Wolfram von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zurich: Artemis, 1953), 141, quoted in Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Tradition* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 78. Eninnu, known as the “house of Ningirsu” was built in the Early Dynastic II period at Lagas.

[Solomon] shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.... Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam 7:13, 16). Solomon needed to legitimize his reign and he did it initially by making an addition to Nathan's oracle, in which the progeny of David were given a place on the throne of Israel forever. Solomon came to power by snatching the kingdom from his more popular brother, Adonijah, who rightfully should have come to the throne as the elder brother. Also Solomon was removing the power which the tribes had traditionally exercised. He needed to couch his power in an oracle from Yahweh that extended David's power forever.<sup>116</sup>

One of the things to notice in the passage from the cylinder was the size of the god. Ningirsu who asked that a temple be built for him is extremely large. Yahweh was also of immense size. He could effect extreme changes of terrestrial geography through God's movement (Hab 3:6).<sup>117</sup> One blow of his nostrils made the water heap up and the deep be uncovered (Exod 15:8). As God walked he flattened mountains and shook the world (Ps 97:3; Hab 3:6). God's movement through the gates of Jerusalem made them lower their heads to allow his passage (Ps 24:7, 9). In the vision of Isaiah, a later text than the early monarchical period God proved so large that merely the hem of his garment filled the temple in Jerusalem (Isa 6:1).

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<sup>116</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 251-255.

<sup>117</sup> Benno Lansberger, "Einige unerkannt gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgen-landes* 57 (1961): 1-23, quoted in Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Tradition* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 79, as follows: "The divine king who makes the mountains tremble went before, Iglaima prepared the way, Ningizzida, his god held his hand" (A.XVIII.14-17). This text describes a ritual procession to a sacrifice in which Gudea's hand is held by Ningizzida. This Assyrian text is reproduced here to show that when this very large god, the divine king, walked the mountains trembled. This resembles Habakkuk 3:6: "He stopped and shook the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble. The eternal mountains were shattered; along his ancient pathways the everlasting hills sank low." Noteworthy also is the god who holds the hand of the human king, which is also found in biblical literature (Pss 73:23; 139:10; Isa 41:10; 45:1).

In a type of ancient biblical literature a theophany of Yahweh took place often leading the troops toward battle. Victory in these wars was the result of Yahweh's participation, the holy wars. In the ancient Song of Deborah (Judg 5:2-31), the theophany of the marching Yahweh warrior was inserted into the larger text. The themes of Deborah's song appear to be the valiant fighting men of Israel and the murder of Sisera at the hand of Jael. The geographic placement of the battle and the death of Sisera make it likely that the Song was originally written in the north about human themes. The royal court of Solomon inserted verses four and five to make it understood that the divine warrior was present and responsible for the war: "Yahweh, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water. The mountains quaked before Yahweh, the One of Sinai, before Yahweh, the God of Israel." The addition to the text verses 4 and 5,<sup>118</sup> use the Near Eastern mythological idea of the storm god who brought the rain with his appearance. The mountains shook and trembled at the god's passing because of his great power. Soggin saw verses 20 to 21 also as an interpolation in which Yahweh made the outcome of the war turn on the power of the river which inundated the enemy. This constituted the power of the storm god over the water. The storm god controlled the rivers after his victory over Yamm. Soggin wrote "Israelite faith felt it necessary to provide this originally secular song with a liturgical framework."<sup>119</sup>

The same theme of the god marching from the south can be found in what Mann called the "classic epiphany texts" (Deuteronomy 33; Judges 5; Psalm 68; Habakkuk

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<sup>118</sup> Fritz Stoltz, *Jahwes und Israels Kriege* (Zürich : Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 104 quoted in Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 184.

<sup>119</sup> J. Alpero Soggin, *Judges, a Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 95, 99.

3).<sup>120</sup> These passages follow many Near Eastern mythological patterns such as Table IV: 49-60 of. the Enuma Elis:

“The Lord [Marduk] raised up the flood, his mighty weapon, the storm chariot irresistible and terrible he mounted. At his right hand he placed fearsome combat and battle, at his left, Conflict, which shoves aside all conspirators. Muffled in a mantle of fearsome mail, with a frightful halo covering his head, the Lord went forth and followed his course, towards the enraged Tiamat he set his face.”<sup>121</sup>

Though Marduk fought a goddess, not a human army, the similarities here between Marduk and Yahweh in Habakkuk 3:3-15 are numerous. Like Marduk, Yahweh drove a chariot (v. 8), was accompanied by minor gods (v. 5), used the flood as his weapon (v. 9), and had a numinous quality (v. 4). These manifestations of Yahweh in these scriptures arose in the early monarchy as additions to the original texts. Yahweh’s physical presence marching before Israel was written into accounts of human wars and the human exodus from Egypt (Deuteronomy 33; Judges 5; Psalm 68; Habakkuk 3).

Yahweh participated visibly and invisibly in the battles of David bringing miraculous victory: “Yahweh brought about a great victory” (2 Sam 23:12b), “Yahweh has gone out before you to smite the army of the Philistines” (2 Sam 5:24), and “Yahweh has burst forth against my enemies before me, like a bursting flood” (2 Sam 5:20). On the holy war Kang wrote that the concept of holy war or “YHWH war” was never connected to a historical battle until the period of David’s wars. Kang did not believe that in the Exodus-conquest, nor in the wars of the Judges and Saul can Yahweh as warrior leading the Israelites in battle be connected with historical battles. From the Davidic-Solomonic

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<sup>120</sup> Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 176.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 48-49.

kingdoms came the holy war idea of Yahweh's participation in the battles, and the divine marching in front of the king and soldiers.<sup>122</sup>

Drawing on accounts of the gods that surrounded Israel, the Davidic/Solomonic monarchy desired to prove that Yahweh favored Israel over all others, guiding her and fighting her battles. Yahweh had been the God of a minor almost insignificant territory, the central highlands of Palestine. The God of the extraordinary accomplishments of David needed to accompany David's rise to power. An early presentation of Yahweh saw the God of Jacob as being one god of many in the court of Elyon: "When Elyon apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods; Yahweh's own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share" (Deut 32:8-9). Yahweh's position changed with the movement of the Davidic kingdom into an empire. Psalm 82 described the new found power of Yahweh over the divine council as taking place because the "sons of Elyon" abused their power by misrule. In the Davidic monarchy as David took over the nations so did Yahweh to the point that Yahweh became lord over the nations: "For Yahweh is awesome Elyon, the great king over all the earth. He subjugated peoples beneath us, nations underneath our feet" (Ps 47:3-4).<sup>123</sup>

Looking at Solomon through the eyes of monotheism, he comes up lacking, for he worshiped other gods. During the time of the early Monarchy, Israelites tolerated the worship of other gods. Solomon worshiped Astarte and Milcom (1 Kgs 11:5). The need of Solomon to raise his kingdom's image meant Yahweh became the head of the

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<sup>122</sup> Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 223-224.

<sup>123</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, "The Religio-Political Setting of Psalm 47," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 221 (1976): 132. Translation by J. J. M. Roberts.

pantheon of gods. The other gods were not dead to the Israelites of Solomon's era; they were part of the pantheon that Yahweh headed and still needed to be worshiped

Most of the physical accounts of Yahweh were made during the Davidic/Solomonic kingdoms. Solomon's court hagiographers wrote back into the accounts of David's rise to power a divine directive and choice of David as "the divine son." The accounts of an embodied God drew upon the other religions of the Near East. Solomon used foreign models to become a king of stature and prestige in the larger world. Solomon needed to have a religion in which his entire realm was united and a religion that legitimated his reign. Solomon was changing the king from a charismatic leader that the tribes decided to follow to an absolute authority that the people followed because the one God willed his rule. Solomon needed control over God. Building the temple provided one place that Yahweh would reside, eat, bless, and judge. The similarity between God on a throne and Solomon on a throne sitting cannot be overlooked. The palace throne of Solomon was south or right of the physical placement of God's throne in the temple. Solomon was living as the divine son by placing the palace and the temple in the relationship that Psalm 110:1 described. Solomon undoubtedly knew that much of his religious power was a political move by himself and his advisors. He had carefully built a public persona.

If the temple was considered a place in which earth and heaven converged, we can say that Solomon believed the real presence of Yahweh existed within the temple: "I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever" (1 Kgs 8:13). We know that sacrificial acts took place at the temple. The extensive terminology associated

with sacrifice in the cult of Yahweh originated in the Canaanite language.<sup>124</sup> The offerings of liquid libations, plants, and animals, a complete diet, were offered as sacrifices. Only a god conceived anthropomorphically would need to eat and would need the food provided by worshipers' sacrifices. The Temple Cult at Jerusalem was devised for a living God who needed sustenance. The sacrifices made to Yahweh were understood as his meals (Lev 21:21). Yahweh daily received a morning and evening meal (Exod 29:38-41; Ps 141:2). Each meal was complete with meat, vegetable, oil, and drink. The Temple gave God a place of residence as a sanctuary, away from noise (I Kgs 6:7) and light (I Kgs 8:12).

Solomon shifted the individual observances of religious holidays and remembrances of past religious historic occasions (i.e. Joshua's entrance into the Promised Land with the ark) of individual shrines to Jerusalem. The center of religious observance became the New Year celebration of both the kingship of Yahweh and God's worldly manifestation, the kingship of David.<sup>125</sup>

One of the reasons Solomon was so successful at reconfiguring the religion was his replacement of Abiathar, the high priest. Abiathar had sided with Adonijah to be crowned king after David's death (1 Kgs 1:7). Therefore Solomon banished Abiathar from all priestly duties and sent him to Anathoth (1 Kgs 2:26-27). With one decision Solomon removed a high priest, who might get in the way of reform, and the last vestige of a highly placed allegiance to the shrines at Shiloh and Nob.<sup>126</sup> With Abiathar's

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<sup>124</sup> Mark Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 22-23.

<sup>125</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 238-239.

<sup>126</sup> Abiathar was the sole survivor from the shrine at Nob, when Saul destroyed the site (1 Sam 22:9-23). The biblical text 1 Kings 2:28 assumed that priests of Shiloh became the priests at Nob when Shiloh was destroyed (Jer 7:14).

banishment, Solomon was given much more of a free hand to reshape religious practices. Solomon's control over religion also meant political control over his subjects. People must come to Jerusalem for cleansing, sacrificing, and religious holidays to the temple of Solomon's design. In Jerusalem, the people would hear a new theology that supported the idea of kingship and empire.

The royal theology that linked the heavenly throne to the earthly throne was undertaken by Solomon's priests and scribes. The monarchical theology may have begun in the era of David, but was further developed in the time of Solomon. Only with the stability and financial resources of Solomon (1 Kgs 10:14) was a new cult possible (2 Chr 8:14-15)<sup>127</sup> to saying nothing of reliance on writing and scribes. The intense changes that Solomon was making in the common man's religion needed a new theological reasoning. Solomon was taking away their places of traditional worship in the shrines and in the festivals of the league. Several facets were included in this theology: a) David was adopted as son of Yahweh, when he was divinely chosen king of Israel, b) God made the kingship of David eternal by choosing David's descendants to rule after his death, c) divine abilities were given to David and his descendants, and d) the mythology of the Canaanite creation story was used. In this creation story the monster Yamm, god of water and essentially chaos, was killed by Baal. Yahweh assumed the identity of Baal.<sup>128</sup>

Psalms were written to promote the new theology. Psalm 89 contains the above features of the monarchical theology. Solomon desired to demonstrate that Yahweh supported the king, but more specifically the Davidic line of rule. The initial way that

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<sup>127</sup> In Second Chronicles 8:14, Solomon controlled the appointment of priests, the Levites, and the gatekeepers of the temple. The king was clearly in charge of the Cult.

<sup>128</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 256-265.

Solomon desired to prove God's support for David was his adoption as a son. In Psalm 89, the adoption motif is not as explicit as God's words in Psalm 2:7b, "You are my son; today I have begotten you." In Psalm 89:26 God proclaimed that David will cry out to Yahweh "You are my Father," with God also saying "I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth" (v 27). The implication was that David was not just a son, but the first, the most important son. Verse 27 indicated that all kings were sons of Yahweh and chosen by God through the adoption process. But Psalm 89 also explicitly said that David's position as monarch was God given: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people" (v 19).

Secondly, the monarchical theology built upon the God-son relationship by making the relationship eternal for the house of David. Frank Moore Cross wrote "that Psalm 89:20-38 was the ultimate statement of this doctrine" in which no negative behavior on the part of David's heirs could cause Yahweh to revoke the eternal contract with the house of David.<sup>124</sup> Psalm 89:29-30, 32-33 declared "I will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure. If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances ... I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips." The adoption was not an adoption of a human for a lifetime, but a cosmic adoption. The eternal quality of the adoption moved the relationship outside of the earthly to the idea of the heavenly. One has stepped from the threshold of this world to the eternal. God alone had eternity, unless bestowed by God on others. This quality of God was depicted in Psalm 90:2 "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth

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<sup>124</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 258.

the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” We are reminded that David’s throne now parallels God’s everlasting throne in Psalm 102:12: “But you, O Yahweh, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations.”

Thirdly, the monarchical theology desired to show that without the divine gifts to the king of power and strength, Israel would likely be conquered, even obliterated, by enemies. The kings were mere mortals until God bestowed gifts upon David and his offspring and fought along side them (89:4, 36). Divine power was given to David in Psalm 89:21, 23: “My hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. I [God] will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.” The Psalmist has already praised Yahweh’s power in verse 13: “You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand.”

Yahweh also gave David the power that Yahweh had assumed by conquering Yamm, called Rahab in verse 10 of Psalm 89: “I set his [David’s] hand on the sea, His right hand over the River” (Ps 89:26). Yahweh here is assuming the role of Baal in the Canaanite story of creation. Yahweh (Baal) killed the god Rahab (Yamm) to take the throne of the cosmos. Yamm whose name literally meant “Sea,” also was called Ruler River.<sup>130</sup> By placing David’s hands over the sea and river, the king gave the world stability, placing him in control of the chaos that Yamm represented.<sup>131</sup> Control over water gave the monarchy command not just over the affairs of humans but over nature. Power over water meant a great deal to a nation living geographically in an area of decreased rain fall. Water’s abundance meant life.

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<sup>130</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 235.

<sup>131</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 258 n. 177.

By using the Canaanite story of creation, Solomon was linking David to familiar stories. The people were aware of the Baal mythology now used for Yahweh. In the midst of new ways of worship, Yahweh was being associated with the old - the comforting mythology of Baal. The new was balanced by the old.

This monarchical theology is also present in Psalms 2 and 110.<sup>132</sup> In both these Psalms God adopted the king as the divine son. The Psalmists used not their own words but quoted the words of Yahweh to make it clear that these were not human declarations but divine. In Psalm 2:7, Yahweh's words of adoption were given as a divine law, using the same word (פְּנָנָה) in which decrees or laws were given to the Prophets (Zech 1:6), to the people through Moses (Deut 4:5, 8, 14), and to Jacob (Ps 105:10 decree || covenant). In Psalm 110:1 the words of God's adoption were given even more weight than a decree by using the oracular formula (נְהַנֵּה דָנָה). This is the only Psalm in which God's words are quoted as a prophetic oracle. In Psalm 2:7 the adoption of the king by God is obvious: "I will tell of the decree of Yahweh : "He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.'" In Psalm 110:1: "Yahweh says to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" The adoption of the king would have been obvious to people of the Psalmist's culture, but the association must be uncovered for modern readers. In the Biblical text of Exodus 11:5; 12:29, the first born of the Pharaoh sat on the monarch's throne. In a Sumerian text, the king sat enthroned at the right hand of the goddess: "She is radiant on the throne, the great high seat, like the day. The king, bright as the sun, takes his place on the throne at her side."<sup>133</sup> The king, "my lord" of

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<sup>132</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 265.

<sup>133</sup> Adam Falkenstein, *Sumerische und akkadische Humnen und Gebete* (Zuerich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953), 98 quoted in Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 2:349.

Psalm 110:1 sat awaiting his enemies as his footstool. A king's throne had footstools (2 Chr 9:18) and could be described as being held up by enemies or as the enemies being placed under the feet of the king as his footstool. In the El Amarna Letters the vassal described himself as the Pharaoh's footstool: "Behold, I am a servant of the king my lord, and the stool of his feet" (141:39-40) and "I am the dust of your feet" (195: 5-10).<sup>134</sup> The image of the vanquished under the feet of the conquering king can be found in the biblical text in Joshua 10:24 and Isaiah 51:23.

In Psalm 110:4 the king became a priest forever on the oath of Yahweh (Amos 4:2; 6:8; Isa 5:9; Ps 95:11). Since the capital was Jerusalem, the king could be continuing the combination of king and priest found in their predecessor Melchizedek. But the eternal role of priest was not given to Melchizedek in the one other Hebrew Bible passage which referred to him (Gen 14:18). Psalm 110:4 cited an eternal election of the king through the office of priest (2 Sam 8:18; 1 Kgs 3:4), which came through his monarchical rule in Psalm 89:29 and 2 Sam 7:16.

In Psalm 110:1 Yahweh told "my lord" the king to sit at his right hand until God put his enemies under his feet. In this passage the king appeared passively waiting for the victory over his enemies. In 110:5-6 Yahweh is again the one who slaughters kings on the day of his wrath (Yahweh's anger), heaping up the corpses, but is the royal gift of strength for battle given to the king in verse 5?: "The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath" (NRSV). In the NRSV translation divine strength is given to the king with God at his right hand. God stands at the right hand of others to strength or give help (Pss 89:25, 42; 109:31; 121:5; Isa 41:10, 63:12). The king appears to be the agent for Yahweh. Now the king is not passive but the aggressor along with

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<sup>134</sup> Michell Dahoof, *Psalms III: 101-150*, 3 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 3:114.

Yahweh who provides the power to strike against the enemy. There is a switch in the king's positions from sitting passively at God's right hand in verse 1 to God being at the king's right hand in verse 5. In this verse the king is the aggressor.<sup>135</sup>

Accounts of God's physical presence held an important place in Israel's literature. Yahweh's presence meant an exaltation of the individuals who saw or heard Yahweh.<sup>136</sup> The traditions that come into the Pentateuch of the physical presence of Yahweh arose very early. The J authors were considered to have written in Judea during the period of the united monarchy, drawing on earlier sources.<sup>137</sup> The passages concerning the God who walked in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8), who was seen by Moses "face to face" (Exod 33:11a), and who came down to earth in order to confuse the speech of humans (Gen 11:7) were written by the J author. The anthropomorphic God of the Hebrew Bible can be placed in the time of the Davidic/Solomonic empire. The psalms that seated Yahweh on a throne in which Yahweh bore elements of the storm god arose during the united kingdom. Gods of Solomon's era throughout the Near East were all physical beings, mostly anthropomorphic. A God who needed to be fed and secured by a temple and a priesthood became a political expedience for Solomon. Solomon's realm would be unified in their worship at the singular location of the temple in Jerusalem and the cult would come under Solomon's control.

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<sup>135</sup> Unless the translation is different as Dahood offered that Melchizedek should not be seen as a proper name but translated "legitimate king." The translation would thus be "You are a priest of the Eternal, according to his pact; His legitimate king, my lord, according to his right hand." In Dahood's translation the power remained with Yahweh's right hand in the fifth, as well as the first verse and no divine ability was given to the king.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 106.

<sup>137</sup> John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judean History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 132.

The Hebrew Bible can not always be spoken of in such broad generalizations as placing the anthropomorphic references to God only in the pieces written by the J source because of the Hebrew Bible contains so many intricate layers of source material. The Priestly Source was likely to have been written in or after the exile.<sup>138</sup> Yet the Priestly writers of Leviticus are known to have used old source material. Leviticus 26:12 must be such a source within this text in which God said “I will walk among you.” In an analogous passage of Ezekiel 37:26-27, Yahweh is merely “among them.” The author purposefully left out the anthropomorphic “walking.”

Yahweh’s depictions would become less anthropomorphic after the writings of the united monarchy. Words or phrases that were an aspect of God took the place of God’s portrayal with human characteristics. The imagery that was used included God’s name (Deut 12:11), glory (Exod 40:34), angel (Exod 14:19), or likeness (Ezek 1:28). In the Sinai account, Moses has one of the most intimate relationships with God in the scriptures: “Yahweh used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exod 33:11a). In Numbers 12:5-8, God declared that Yahweh spoke to other prophets in visions and dreams but “with him I speak face to face-clearly, not in riddles; and he [Moses] beholds the *form* of Yahweh.” In the Sinai account written by the Deuteronomist, anthropomorphic representations of God were removed to adhere to the second commandment’s ban on depictions of God with a *form* (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8). The Deuteronomist writers would claim that Yahweh was heard at Sinai, but never seen: “Then Yahweh spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no *form*; there was only a voice” (Deut 4:12). “Since you saw *no form* when Yahweh spoke

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<sup>138</sup> John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judean History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 124.

to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure—the likeness of male or female” (Deut 4:15-16; cf. Deut 4:23, 25). The word “form” is found only two other texts in the Old Testament.<sup>139</sup> Yet even in the book of Deuteronomy the well established idea that Moses spoke to Yahweh “face to face” is found (Deut 5:4; 34:10). To exclude the personal relationship with Yahweh in which Moses spoke directly with God meant the erosion of Moses’ position as the greatest prophet of Israel.

The conceptualization of God’s anthropomorphic presence changed. The Deuteronomist, the Priestly, and the classical prophets all limit Yahweh’s anthropomorphism. The people of Israel had been described as having presented “the food of their God” in the giving of their sacrifices (Lev 21:6, 8, 17; 22:25). As thinking developed, offerings were no longer accepted as food to be consumed by God: God now only liked the pleasant odor of the sacrifice (Ps 50:12-14; Num 28:2). The idea of a God who participated only in the smelling of food rather than in the feasting presented a less anthropomorphic God.

Substitutions for God’s physical presence begin to be made. The Priestly authors replace God’s visible presence with his “glory” (kābōd), which allows for God’s transcendent presence to reside in heaven. The Deuteronomist liked to speak of God’s name.

### **The Throne of Yahweh**

The Priestly writings of the Hebrew Bible named the God of the Patriarchs as

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<sup>139</sup> Job 4:16 and Psalm 17:15. In Psalm 17:15, the form of God has been seen by the Psalmist.

“El Shadday.” In Exodus 6:2-3, God explained to Moses that God’s true name was Yahweh, and this name had never been revealed to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob: “I am Yahweh, I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai.”<sup>140</sup> The early name, El Shadday, and the later name, YHWY, both described the one God of Israel, but God’s comments to Moses also made it clear that the Patriarchs worshiped the Canaanite God, El. They worshiped El out of ignorance of God’s proper or personal name. Yahweh was El, as the Priestly writers proclaimed.<sup>141</sup>

When God called himself by name, speaking directly to the Patriarchs, God was recorded as saying “I am El Shadday” in Genesis 17:1 and 35:11, which are both products of the Priestly strata.<sup>142</sup> After introducing himself as El Shadday, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel (Genesis 35:10), the new name contained “el.” Any appellation containing a shortened form of Yahweh would not have held any meaning in this early period, when we are told that God declared himself to be El Shadday. Jacob upon arriving at Luz (Bethel) built an altar and named it El-Bethel. The Priestly writers depended upon more ancient texts to arrive at their conclusion that the Patriarchs worshiped El Shadday. The ancient poetry of Genesis 49:24b-25a recorded “El” and “Shadday” in parallel:

By the Bull of Jacob,  
By the strength of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel,  
By El, your Father, who helps you,

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<sup>140</sup> The words for God have not been translated into English as the NSRV translated them, but the phonetic sounds of the Hebrew original script have been used: thus NRSV translation “the Lord” has become “Yahweh”.

<sup>141</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 34.

<sup>142</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), 47 n.

By Shadday, who blesses you<sup>143</sup>

This text was derived from the period of the Judges, possibly in the eleventh century.<sup>144</sup>

The Bull of Jacob was an additional phrase used in the Biblical poetry of Gen 49:25.

Bull was a title word in Canaanite mythology that described El as fecund and strong.

Though the exilic Priestly writings came at a great chronological distance from the Patriarchs, they reflect a need to explain why the Patriarchs were worshipping the Canaanite deity, El. The Priests made the justification that the Patriarchs called Yahweh by the only name they knew for the God of Israel, which was El. The early worship of El by the Hebrew forefathers explains why the Hebrew Bible had so little acrimony for El and why Yahweh so easily took over by assimilation the cultic sites that belonged to El. These shrines of El were the Patriarch's places of worship. As Yahweh absorbed these sacred sites, the descriptive labels that had once been associated with El were used for Yahweh.<sup>145</sup> The shrine at Beersheba was known as El Olam (Gen 21:33), so Yahweh's assimilation of El meant Yahweh would be known as eternal (olam). Yahweh took over many of the physical qualities of El, along with his titles.

El has been described in Canaanite texts and iconography as the enthroned bearded god often found with a scepter in hand. Statues of El as the king seated on his

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<sup>143</sup> Bruce Vawter, "The Canaanite Background of Genesis 49," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 17 (1955): 12-17. Vawter's translation is given here. Vawter claimed that there were two titles for Asherah in Gen. 49:24-26.

<sup>144</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), 52 n.

<sup>145</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), 48. The different El shrines [El Olam at Beersheba (Gen 21:33), El Elyon in Jerusalem (Gen 14:18), El-Elohe-Israel at Shechem (Gen 33:20), El-roi at Beer-labai-roi (Gen 16:13) and El-bethel at Bethel (Gen 35:7) do not represent worship of different El gods. The different epithets for El used to name these shrines might be comparable to the names of Christian churches. Christ the King, Jesus the Redeemer, and Christ the Good Shepherd, which represent different aspects of the Christ.

throne have been found at Ras Shamra and Megiddo.<sup>146</sup> In the Canaanite mythology of the “Baal Cycle,” El was pictured as the seated old god with gray beard who receives the other gods in his tent<sup>147</sup> upon his mountain (CTU 3 E 11-17). The gods gathered in his “tent of meeting” to hear the judgments of El, which were irrevocable. The elder El functioned to judge and hand down decrees that settled the younger gods’ questions and conflicts from his sedentary position upon the throne. There was no question that he was king over the divine council. Though Baal was given the title king, his input to the council was not always heeded. El was the preeminent judge and ruler. In order to sit El has to be embodied. His anthropomorphic physical nature was also established by his fathering of 70 children<sup>148</sup> and his feasting with the other gods on tree sap and cooked carcasses (KTU 4 6 55-59). In old age, his main duty was to be enthroned, as the royal decision maker. The other gods waited upon him in deference to his age and wisdom.

Many of the characteristics of El would be taken over by Yahweh. Foremost of these features was Yahweh’s chief position upon the throne from which he reigned: “Yahweh has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps 103:19; cf. 47:8; 97:1-2; 93:1-2). Most of Israel’s literature contained a description of God enthroned. A very early reference to God’s throne may appear in Exodus 15:17, “the place you made to sit in.” God’s throne is found in the early Psalms (Pss 29:10; 89:14), in the writings of the classical prophets (Isa 6:1), in late pre-exilic prophetic

<sup>146</sup> Ora Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv: Peli Printing Words Ltd., 1976), 114-115, 119.

<sup>147</sup> Mark Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 188-189. El’s tent and the biblical tent of meeting are culturally related. El’s tent was located in the divine realm, while the tent of meeting was within the world of humanity.

<sup>148</sup> J. C. L. Gibson, “Shachar and Shalim and the Gracious Gods” in *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 123-127. The text, “Shachar and Shalim” spoke graphically of El’s virility as he fathered two gods, Shachar and Shalim with two women. There is no way to date this text to know if it was a youthful conquest before his marriage to the mother of the seventy, but El showed more vigor here than in the “Baal Cycle” in which he appeared as an old, probably impotent god.

literature (Jer 14:21), exilic texts (Lam 5:19), and post-exilic writings (Dan 7:9). To mention Yahweh's enthronement meant divine rule, so the throne of God held an important centrality during every period of Israel's sacred writings. The importance of Yahweh's throne in establishing his kingship can be seen in the Hebrew Bible by looking at the significance of the throne to the earthly king. The throne with the seated monarch upon it stood as the central symbol of the power to rule. To unseat a monarch from the throne meant the removal of his authority to command, as in Ezekiel 26:16 and Isaiah 47:1. In Psalm 89:44 the scepter is taken from the king's hand and the throne is hurled to the ground. This meant that the human was removed from the power and authority of his kingdom. In Haggai 2:22 the overturned throne symbolized the loss of the kingdom. To question who would be the next to reign was to ask who would subsequently sit on the throne (1 Kgs 1:20).<sup>149</sup> Unlike human kings, God's throne was everlasting and Yahweh sat for eternity upon the divine throne (Pss 45:6; 93:2).

The official portraiture of the God of Israel was the divine session; Yahweh seated on the throne characterized a strong God in control of all creation. Prophets often received their calling by a vision of God upon the throne. To report the prophet's vision of God enthroned became a common way of notifying others that one was a prophet (Isa 6:1; Ezek 1:26; 1Kgs 22:19), though details of the enthronement differed. Announcing one's prophetic legitimacy by telling others that the prophet had seen God upon the throne made this vision a stable picture for Israel. The Psalms also characterized God as seated on the throne (Pss 9:4; 11:4; 29:10; 47:8; 55:9). God's session is a portrait, a single snapshot, that doesn't involve a series of pictures to illustrate movement. God

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<sup>149</sup> Marc Zvi Brettler, *God Is King* (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 1989), 81-83.

sitting on the throne gave Israel one strong image, which was used through out all periods of biblical literature.

The Bible described other contexts in which humans saw Yahweh, although either no vision is specified (Pss 27:4, 13; Job 42:5) or only God's face (Pss 11; 7; 17:15) or Gods' power and glory (Ps 63:2) were seen. These human sightings of God do not draw a complete portrait of an entire visual image. In several biblical contexts the people declare that they have seen God, but the author obscures that vision by substituting the Angel of the Lord for God (Gen 16:10-13; 33:24-30).

God is described as walking and talking in the Garden Eden (Gen 2:4-3:24) and descending with others to scramble the languages of Earth (Gen. 11:7). God rode the storm clouds (Deut 33:26; 2 Sam: 10-11 = Ps 18:10; Ps 68:4) and sent arrows of lightning to the earth (Pss 18:15; 97:4-5) in a depiction of Yahweh taken from Baal. This portrayal spanned the period of the monarchy in Israel's literature. God was also described as the warrior who marched to war from the South (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4; Hab 3:3-6) and fought Israel's enemies (Josh 10:14; Hab 3:11-14; Isa 42:13). The Storm God and Divine Warrior were often interwoven. They appeared with the early monarchy and reappeared with the prophets in the sixth century.<sup>150</sup> Though the images of God fighting for Israel and the storm theophany held important images of God, they did not hold the same power of God as the divine ruler. God could be king in times of national distress and war or in the times of prosperity, an image for all seasons.

Yahweh pronounced judgment from his throne. El too was the judge of Canaanite mythology. Baal lauded El's judgments in the Baal Cycle:

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<sup>150</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), 170.

Your decree, O El, is wise,  
Your wisdom is eternal,  
A life of good fortune thy decree.”<sup>151</sup>

Yahweh's judgments were considered righteous, not wise, as portrayed in Psalm 9:

You (God) have sat on the throne giving *righteous judgment*. (v 4b)  
But the LORD sits enthroned forever, (v 7)  
    he has established his throne for judgment.  
He judges the world with righteousness; (v 8)  
    he judges the peoples with equity.  
The LORD is a stronghold for the *oppressed*,  
    a stronghold in times of trouble. (v 9)

The principles upon which the throne was established were righteousness and justice (Pss 89:14; 97:2). God judged equitably, fairly, and without prejudice toward any, whether or not they held wealth, power, or position. A hallmark of Yahweh's eternal reign was justice for the oppressed and the giving of a positive judgment for the hungry, the orphan and the widow (Pss 10: 16-18; 76:9; 103:7, 10; 146:7-10). Human kings and judges of Israel were asked to judge by the principles of righteousness and justice (Prov 16:12; Isa 9:7; 2 Chr 9:8; 2 Chr 19:6-7), for they were representatives of God. “Blessed be Yahweh your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for Yahweh your God. Because your God loved Israel and would establish them forever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness” (2 Chr 9:8). Yahweh judged the gentile as well as God's own people (Ps 82:8)

To be a successful human king was to have taken on the attributes of the divine throne, though no human could approach the exalted nature of God's ideal throne. In 2 Samuel 7:13, David's throne was described as enduring, firm, stable (יְמִינָה). Psalm 93 established God's stability and the secure world that God has created. In verse 2,

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<sup>151</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), CTA 4.4.41-44. Translation by Cross.

Yahweh's throne is established as firm (כָּוּ). Without the assurance that God's power over the world was firm, the human could imagine that all things could begin to unravel and go spinning out of control. Verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 93 return to the myth of God conquering the sea from Canaanite mythology. The sea was a mythical representation of chaos, which God prevailed over at the beginning to bring stability to the universe.

A second characteristic of the flourishing human throne was its high exalted (מְנֻמָּר) nature, which the king of Babylon exhibited (Isa 14:13). God's throne was gloriously high above the earth and acclaimed above all other things imaginable (Jer 17:12; Isa 6:1). God's heavenly throne allowed God to be lifted up over all the common things of the world, which included the gritty fallibility of human and animal nature, but the extravagant height also allowed for God's omniscience. Thirdly, David's throne was everlasting (Pss 89:5, 30, 37; 132:12). God's throne was from the beginning and will never go away (Pss 9:7; 93:2), which also gave stability to God's creation.

Yahweh took over the images, characteristics, and theology of El by equating the one god with the other: El was an older name for Yahweh. Later, Baal's images and theology were adapted to Yahweh.<sup>152</sup> Yahweh exhibited all the symbolism of a monarch. He had a throne, a scepter, and other gods did obeisance before him. The poetry of Canaan described both El and Baal as gods with thrones and scepters to designate them as sovereigns (CTU 2 3:18-19). The throne and scepter also become the representation of Yahweh's rule: "Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity" (Ps 45:6). The enthronement of Yahweh is often accompanied with the depiction of Yahweh as a storm god, which is Baal's role. Psalm 97 declared that

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<sup>152</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997), 186.

Yahweh is king with his throne surrounded by clouds. Baal, the storm god of Phoenicia and Canaan, proudly wore the name “cloud rider” (CTU 3 D 4 48-50). Baal’s Mount Zaphon would be covered with clouds much of the year as the Mountain receives the most annual rainfall on the coastal Levant at over fifty-seven inches.<sup>153</sup> The fire of lightning served as Yahweh’s weapons to annihilate his adversaries (v. 3). Baal’s deadly weapon used against Yamm was also lightning.<sup>154</sup>

Psalm 97:1-4:

- <sup>1</sup>Yaweh is king! Let the earth rejoice;  
    let the many coastlands be glad!
- <sup>2</sup>Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;  
    righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
- <sup>3</sup>Fire goes before him,  
    and consumes his adversaries on every side.
- <sup>4</sup>His lightnings light up the world;  
    the earth sees and trembles.

Later in Psalm 97, other gods are called upon to do obeisance before Yahweh: “all gods bow down before him.” In this Psalm gods, not angels or humans, are called upon to do their bowing before Yahweh. In the Ugaritic poems the formula for obeisance is for the gods to “bow low” and “fall” at the feet of El (CTU 2 3 6). The word for gods will be used as those who make up Yahweh’s royal court, until Israel declared exclusive monotheism. Without the acceptance of exclusive monotheism the gods, other than Yahweh, were denied existence (Ps. 96:5; Isa 45:5). With monotheism the court of God became the angels that surround the throne (Ps 103; Isa 6:1-2; Ezek 10:1).

Most of the depictions of Yahweh upon the throne have their beginnings in storm-god theology. Psalm 11 portrayed the enthroned Yahweh by mentioning several parts of God’s physical body. The advantage of being enthroned in the heavens allowed God

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<sup>153</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 123.

<sup>154</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 98. The weapons, which Baal used against Yamm, symbolized lightning.

omniscience: “His eyes behold, his gaze examines humankind” (v. 4). Yahweh punished the wicked by raining “coals of fire and sulfur” upon them (v. 6), along with “a scorching wind,” which depicted a weather god hurling lightning, sulfur, and a relentless searing wind upon the people below. “The upright shall behold his face” (v. 7), which is much like the beatitude of Jesus, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”<sup>155</sup> The mythology of El and Baal does not have the moral component found in the Old Testament. Baal brought rain back to the earth and the people rejoiced, but the rain fell upon the entire population regardless of their rectitude or immorality. The Psalms portrayed Yahweh as a punisher of those who are evil and the reward giver of those who live moral lives: “you love righteousness and hate wickedness” (Ps 45:7a). Even when weather-god theology is found, the message that accompanies it is God’s radically moral character: “Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne” (Ps 97:2).

For at least a period of Israel’s history Yahweh was embodied. The body of God would be a necessity to sit on a throne. The Psalms portraits in which Yahweh sat among the members of his court are reminiscent of the seated El. El has no need to get up, for the other gods did his bidding and sought him out on his mountain. Yahweh also has little need to arise, for the angels did what was required by God: “Yahweh has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless Yahweh, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word. Bless Yahweh, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will” (Ps 103:19-21).

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<sup>155</sup> Matthew 5:8

## The Right Hand in the Hebrew Bible

In Hebrew, the word hand was an accepted idiom for one's power or strength. In 2 Kgs 19:16 and Isa 37:27 "small of hand" meant small of power or a weak person. In Ps 78:42 and Job 27:11 "hand" means power. This Hebrew idiom has been so generally accepted that the word "hand" is often translated into English as "power."<sup>156</sup> The right hand takes the connotation of power, but is commonly translated as right hand.

The Hebrew Bible contained two images of the right hand: the divine right hand and the human right hand. God's right hand symbolized divine activity within the world. The right hand was God's mechanism to sweep through history, God's way of entering the world of humans to powerfully effect outcomes for or against Israel. The right hand was God's immanence. It could gently support, becoming a place of refuge, or produce a menacing force to be used for or against Israel. The right hand of a human was locus of human activity and strength, but the right hand was the place of honor to which other humans were elevated. The right side was the side that needed purification of a priest at ordination. The right side was the active side through which people incurred sin.

God's right hand worked on a huge scale. God's right hand created the heavens (Isa 48:13), caused the victories of Israel (Pss 20:6, 48:10; 60:5), and provided protection and safety for individuals and the nation Israel (Pss 17:7; 63:8; 139:10).

### Creation through God's right hand

Isa 48: 12b-13 "I am He; I am the first, and I am the last, My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they stand at attention."

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<sup>156</sup>In the NRSV for the Hebrew text of Gen 31:29, "in my hand" is translated as "in my power." Likewise, another example of this common idiom, "in your hand" is translated "in your power" in the English NSRV rendering of Gen 16:6 and Exod 4:21.

The initiating action of God is creation. Second Isaiah makes it known that God leaves creation to no other agent, but willfully does the work by God's own hand. God's absolute power in history and nature may be discerned in the fact that God is the Creator. God so intimately knows all the universe that what would be amazing, even miraculous, to humanity is not to God, for God knows how to arrange and move the smallest detail of what was divinely formed. God will not remain aloof from what God created, but moves purposefully within the world to do what is best for his creation.

#### God's right hand gives victory to Israel

Exod 15:6, 12 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power—  
your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy....  
You stretched out your right hand,  
the earth swallowed them.

The Song of the Sea<sup>157</sup> was probably orally composed in the era of the Judges, but took written form in the early monarchy. The Song declared that Yahweh alone saved the Hebrews, as the divine warrior (Exod 15:3). Israel played no part in the overcoming of the Egyptians. The miraculous event made God's right hand the instrument that gave the shattering blow to the enemy. Another body part, the divine nostril, blew the water, forcing it back in order that the Egyptians would fall into the water. Yahweh's size was quite large that one blow from his nose could pile up the water into a huge mass. The

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<sup>157</sup> Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 115-116, n 9. A detailed history of the debate over the dating of the Song of the Sea is given by Sa-Moon Kang. A. Bender "Das Lied Exodus 15" in *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 23 (1903): 47. Bender placed a late date of 450 BC on the Song. W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), 14. Albright dated the Son of the Sea in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC on the basis of Ugaritic parallels. Frank Moore Cross and David Freedman, *Studies in ancient Yahwistic poetry* (Missoula, MT.: Scholars Press, 1975), 45-68. Cross and Freedman set the date of the Song as composed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century with the present version in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. Others place the song between the early and late dates placing it in the period of the united or early divided monarchy.

divine right hand made the muck of the sea floor swallow the Egyptians. This event became the central act of salvation that would be remembered again and again, with contemporary relevance for each new generation. This song began the use of the exaltation of the divine warrior's power with the phrase "Your right hand, glorious in power."

Yahweh's participation in the overcoming of the Egyptians at the Sea was technically not a divine war, because humans did not fight on the side of Israel. Divine warfare was a common understanding in the ancient Near East. To be considered divine warfare, the battle must be historical combat in which human armies fought one another. In divine warfare, the national god was given credit for the success of the military campaign. Chemosh, the national god of the Moabites (Num 21:29; 1 K 11:7, 33), brought victory for Mesha, the Moabite king in the war against Israel: "When the king of Israel had fortified Jahaz, and occupied it, Chemosh drove the king of Israel out before Mesha" (lines 18-19).<sup>158</sup> For the victory, Mesha gave to Chemosh part of the spoils of war, and presented the Israelite city of Nebo to the god.

Other gods that were known to be warriors were Baal, Anat, and Reshef, though the Ugaritic mythology never mentioned that they led warfare in human battles. An inscription of Ramses II compared the Pharaoh to the warrior Baal: "He [Ramses] seized his weapon of war; he girded his coat of mail; he was like Baal in his hour." "No man is he who is among us; it is Seth great of strength, Baal in person."<sup>159</sup> The warrior

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<sup>158</sup> J. Liver, "The War of Mesha, King of Moab," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 99 (1967): 15 ff. quoted in Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 76-77.

<sup>159</sup> Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3 vols. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973) II: 64, 67 quoted in Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 78.

iconography of both Baal and Reshef showed these gods with their right hand grasping a weapon over their head ready to strike a blow. This posture of the warrior god whose right hand is in the act of slaughter has been identified as the menacing pose.<sup>160</sup> This same pose of Yahweh's right hand delivering the blows to the enemy was figuratively used in the Hebrew Psalms. The right hand of Yahweh was the means of defeating the enemy in these Psalms: "Your right hand is filled with victory" (Ps 48:10); "His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory" (Ps 98:1), "That your beloved may be delivered give victory by your right hand and answer us" (Ps 60:5); "I will uphold you with my victorious right hand" (Ps 41:10); and "Give victory with your right hand, and answer me, so that those whom you love may be rescued" (Ps 108:6). One of the most laudatory remembrances that Yahweh's strength had won the battle was found in Psalm 118:15-16: "There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: 'The right hand of Yahweh does valiantly; the right hand of Yahweh is exalted; the right hand of Yahweh does valiantly.'"

Psalms were written to remind the people of Israel that the victories that gave them the land of Israel came not by their own strength but from the strength of Yahweh symbolized in the divine right hand: "For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm give them victory; but your right hand" (Ps 44:3). "And he brought them to his holy mountain which his right hand had won" (Ps 78:54). Yahweh's right hand was found 11 times<sup>161</sup> as the direct means of winning battles. The Psalms declare God to be the warrior king so often that the battlefield appears to be God's most common place of assistance to Israel. War's victories were remembered, because war

<sup>160</sup> Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 76-79.

<sup>161</sup> Pss 20:6; 41:10; 44:3; 48:10; 60:5; 89:13; 98:1; 108:6; 118:15,16; 138:7; Is 41:10.

gave the most dramatic display of God's power.<sup>162</sup> War gave a conclusive decision of winner or loser. Only if Yahweh led the battle was victory assured.

With the right hand of Yahweh so often mentioned as the cause of victory in the Psalms, one might conclude that Israel was constantly involved in divine warfare. But the only era of Israel's history that actually practiced divine warfare was during the Kingdom of David.<sup>163</sup> These Psalms were likely written during David's era or written during Solomon's time to reflect positively on his father.<sup>164</sup> Psalm 89 was known to be written in the time of Solomon for it places the descendants on the throne of David forever (v 4). Both David's and Solomon's successions to the throne were suspect. Legitimately, the throne should have gone to Saul's children not to David. The customary successor of David would be the oldest living child, who was Adonijah not Solomon. Solomon's people made David's kingdom so glorious and the theology of God's positive response to David so definite that no one might question David's descendant's place on the throne. Verse 13 of Psalm 89 extolled the strength of God's right hand. The powerful divine right hand was portrayed as remaining with David to strengthen him in verse 21. By verse 42, however a contradiction had taken place, for God has exalted the right hand of David's enemies. God does not only use his own right hand to bring about military victory, God also strengthens the right hand of the human king. God favored the Judeans by grasping the right hand of the Persian Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1 for Cyrus' success in war allowed the return of the Judeans to Judah. In Isaiah

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<sup>162</sup> Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 33.

<sup>163</sup> Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 73.

<sup>164</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible Psalms*, 3 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968) Dahood listed Ps 60 – II, 76; Ps 89 - II, 311; Ps 138 – III, 276 as Psalms in David's time. In Psalm 118 - III, 156, Dahood merely labels its composition date as an early date. Dahood gave no date of composition for Psalms 98.

41:12b-13a, the Israelites are not to fear in war: “Those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, Yahweh your God, hold your right hand.” In Psalm 110:5, God was present at the King’s right hand. In this verse divine warfare would take place, the king would have fought the battle, but Yahweh was to be the active warrior, engaged in the battle to shatter kings and heap up corpses on the day of divine anger.

Yahweh’s intervention in war was described by the formula *נתן בְּ יָד* or “to give into one’s hand.” Yahweh would place a nation or individual into one’s hand or into one’s power. The formula appears in Deuteronomic literature as a description of divine warfare. The Deuteronomic history used the phrase 121 times out of 134 in the entire Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>165</sup>

### God’s right hand supports and protects

One of Israel’s greatest statements of faith lay in their belief that God was as close as their right hand: “I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Ps 16:8). The individual and nation needed a benevolent God to protect them from the harshness of life - war, draught, disease, and social upheaval. God was present in trouble to protect the people of Israel: “Yahweh is your keeper; Yahweh is your shade at your right hand. Yahweh will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life” (Ps 121:5, 7) and “For I, Yahweh your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you’” (Isa 41:13). This protection extended to battle, but the Psalms proclaimed a theological statement that God’s protection was especially for those who loved him: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the

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<sup>165</sup> Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1989), 130-131.

shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress; my God in whom I trust.’ A thousand may fall at your side ten thousand at your right hand: but it will not come near you” (Ps 91:1-2, 7).

God was not only present at the human’s right hand, but God’s right hand held the Israelites: “My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me” (Psalm 16:8). The Psalms about God’s protective right hand are articulated with great beauty: “If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast” (Ps 139:9-10); “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me” (Ps 138:7).

Several Psalmists did not appear to differentiate between the human right hand and the divine right appendage. They were not concerned about the spatial differentiations they were describing. The authors of Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 switched from the human’s right hand to God’s right hand. Within Psalm 110, the king is asked to sit at God’s right hand (v 1) and later God is at the king’s right hand (v 5), which puts the king on God’s left. The Psalmist was undoubtedly using two different symbolisms. To sit at one’s right hand meant honor, especially when enthroning a son. The son was taking a place on the king’s throne itself. God fighting at a human’s right hand was a description of divine warfare in which the god fought invisibly along side the human to empower the human’s hand of active warfare.

## The Accuser at One's Right Hand

In the Hebrew Bible Satan is not a proper name as it would become in later Judaism and Christianity, but a position of the satan or the accuser. In Zechariah 3:2 and Job 1-2, “the” always accompanied “satan,” which took away the possibility of being an appellation. In Zechariah 3:2, the satan stands at the right hand of the high priest Joshua to accuse him, playing the role of the district attorney. The satan took his place as one of the sons of Elohim, an honored part of the household of God or an attendant in a divine council in Job 1:6. The satan is described anthropomorphically for he has been walking up and down on the earth. Divine figures with anthropomorphic depictions are considered good. When Satan becomes the devil, he will be depicted as a monster (Rev 12:9). Smith described the satan by saying “The figure of (the) *satan* may be seen as expressing the negative divine disposition toward humans within the godhead, while the figure of God expresses within the godhead the positive divine disposition of mercy and generosity toward humans.”<sup>166</sup> The satan’s accusations in Zechariah 3:1-9 prove true, for Joshua was clothed in dirty attire symbolizing his sinfulness, the filth of his soul. God removed Joshua’s guilt and gave him festive attire.

In Psalm 109, God stood at the right hand of the needy “to save them from those who would condemn them to death” (v 31). In this Psalm God intervenes in the court process to bring a positive resolution to the charges against the accused.

### Parallels

The right hand symbolizes God’s divine strength and power in the poetry of the Hebrew Bible. In the synonymous parallelism of this poetry, the words “hand,” “right

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<sup>166</sup> Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 118.

hand,” “arm,” and “power” are used in different combinations of parallel phrases and verses (Pss 89:13,21; 98:1; 111:6-7; Isa 50:2; Jer 27:5). The arm and hand were often seen as equal, for the hand could take no action without the arm, and the hand, which held a weapon or formed clay, was a necessary tool of the arm. The arm, hand, and right hand represented action and force to a society that knew few mechanical devices greater than a level or mill wheel. Even these simple mechanical devices need the hand or the power of an animal to be attached to them to make them work effectively. Most people are right handed. Their work comes from the right hand, thus the right hand is understood as the hand of strength. The synonymous parallelism of these body parts with power describes that the hand and arm meant power to the Hebrew poets.

To think of divine power resting in the right hand of God would lead some to think that this anthropomorphizes God, but the Hebrew Bible used caution in speaking of God. The hand or face of God provided only a glimpse of God without a total physical portrait. These terms were meant to represent abstract qualities of God. The hand symbolized God’s action within history, while the face spoke of God’s presence. These were the symbols of God’s immanence – the right hand and the face. Human words and concepts limited the majesty and vastness of God; these terms meant to describe the care, and the interest of God in human events.<sup>167</sup> The hand as a symbol of God’s active power meant God did not remain outside the world in heavenly glory, but entered the world as an active participant for Israel, God’s people.

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<sup>167</sup> Other traditions in the Hebrew Bible suggest God with a body, but even in these traditions there is not a great deal of detail given about God’s physical presence. In the earliest stages of the Hebrew Bible in the J tradition God walks and talks. God appears in the third chapter of Genesis to be corporal, but there is never a description of the divine appearance. In Ezekiel’s vision of chapter one, Ezekiel very cautiously described the throne as “like a throne” and God’s bodily appearance as “something that seemed like a human form”, when speaking of God’s presence on a throne. In the seventh chapter of Daniel, God has white garments and hair. The Ancient of Days sits on a throne, which describes an action necessitating a body. Daniel’s description of God is the most human.

Ugaritic mythology was composed orally as poetry to be sung. The poets developed the use of parallelism as a devise to help them remember the song during countless repetitions. Frank Moore Cross found that like themes, meters, verse styles, and parallelisms were consistent from Canaanite poetry to old Hebrew poetry: “The repertoire of formulae - and even complete verse forms – is continuous from Old Canaanite to archaic Hebrew verse, a phenomenon best explained by transmission in bardic tradition, not in writing.”<sup>168</sup> The rhythms and parallels became common cultural ways of building a song that passed from Canaan to Israel. Ginsberg wrote as early as 1945: “The members of such pairs [parallel pairs] – with apparently no exceptions in Ugaritic poetry and with very few in Hebrew – are always employed in the same order, and that order is also always nearly the same in both literatures.”<sup>169</sup> Many parallels in the Bible using “right hand” were used first in Ugaritic poetry. These include hand || right hand, right hand || left hand (*רָאשׁוֹν*), right hand || mouth, and face || right hand. The fact that the parallels appear in the prophets cautions us from saying that all Psalms with these parallels are ancient. Most of the Psalms have been dated by Dahood as prior to the prophets and pre-Exilic, while “not a few of them (e.g., Pss 2, 16, 18, 29, 60, 68, 82, 58) may well have been composed in the Davidic period.”<sup>170</sup> Many of the Psalms that contain these parallels were composed in eras in which some of Israel worshiped Baal along with Yahweh, for this was true until the exile. The prophets gave their prophesies

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<sup>168</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1998) 139.

<sup>169</sup> Ginsberg, “The Ugaritic Parallel to Jer 8:23” in the *Journal of Near Easter Studies* XX (1961), 41-46 quoted in Loren R. Fisher, ed., *Ras Shamra Parallels*, 3 vols. (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972), 1:77.

<sup>170</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I*, 3 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 1: xxix-xxx.

through poetry, which allowed them to return to the old parallels. They also return to the old Canaanite mythology.<sup>171</sup>

The parallel of hand and right hand that came from Canaanite poetry was found in the Hebrew bible in the very ancient “Song of Deborah,” the Psalms, and Second Isaiah. It is not clear why the poetic conventions of early poetry and Canaanite mythology returned in the prophets of the classical era. Only Second Isaiah showed signs of written composition, yet these writings were based on earlier poetic forms.

In the parallel of “hand and right hand,” the word hand without adjective clearly was idiomatically accepted for the left hand. This was portrayed in the “Song of Deborah.”<sup>172</sup> Jael needed to hold the peg in her left hand for the purpose of hammering the pointed peg with her right hand: “She put her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen’s mallet; she struck Sisera a blow, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple” (Judg 5:26). Hand stood for the left hand also in Isaiah 48:12-13. Isaiah has set up opposites in line 12: “I am first and I am last,” which Isaiah will parallel with the opposites of the left and right hand in the next line: “My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens.” This poetic parallel of “hand and right hand” has been established as a standard parallel of the Levant.

In the hand, right hand parallel, the left was never spoken because it was less auspicious than the right. The right hand dominates for the right hand is the hand of

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<sup>171</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Harvard: 1973), 169. The depiction of God in the storm theophany reappeared in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

<sup>172</sup> John Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judean History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 309-310. Hayes places the “Song of Deborah” as well as most of the Judges accounts as arising in the north. This would place them in a closer vicinity to the Baal mythology that arose from the north, the Tyre and Sidon area.

power that gave the blows or does the work. The Iconography shows Baal with his right hand raised to fight and El with his right hand raised as in judgment.

In the writings of the Deuteronomist, the idea of what is the good or correct path for Israel's and the individual's life is neither to the right or left but straight ahead: "You must therefore be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn to the *right* or to the *left*. You must follow exactly the path that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess" (Deut 5:32-33). This decision that straight was the good path was characteristic only of the Deuteronomist, and was not found in the remainder of the Old Testament. Continuing on the straight course was a statement of the larger theology of the Deuteronomist, which explained Israel's exile as punishment for Israel's turning away from the straight path that God had laid out in the laws.

### God's Hand was the Force that Overtook the Prophets

The classical prophets attributed their prophetic ability to the hand of God falling upon them. Their inspiration to speak prophetically and have visions came when God's power came over them. The divine power was symbolized by God's hand placed upon the prophets. This experience could not be spoken of as the Spirit of God being given to them, because the power came and then was gone, with God choosing the time and place of the prophetic experience. The eighth<sup>173</sup> and seventh-century prophets<sup>174</sup> claim the Spirit as the power behind their abilities (with the possible exception of Micah 3:8).

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<sup>173</sup> Amos, Micah, Hosea, Isaiah

<sup>174</sup> Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk

These prophets credit either the “word of God” or the “hand of God” as the source of their inspiration. God’s hand came upon Isaiah to provide the divinely inspired words which Isaiah will later speak in Isaiah 8:11: “For the LORD spoke thus to me while his hand was strong upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people.”

Ezekiel, a later prophet, spoke about the Spirit moving him in visions from place to place. The hand of God, however, brought him the visions: “As I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. I looked, and there was a figure that looked like a human being; below what appeared to be its loins it was fire, and above the loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming amber” (Ezek 8:1b-2). Jeremiah spoke of God’s giving him the divine words in a vision at his inauguration as a prophet: “Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, ‘Now I have put my words in your mouth’” (Jer 1:9). “The Classic prophets often used spirit as an eschatological term. The Spirit would bring in a new world at the end of time.”<sup>175</sup>

In the exilic and post-exilic period, the prophets spoke of their inspiration coming from Spirit, Word, and Hand, as though these terms were interchangeable. The pouring out of the Spirit stood as a term that alone described the New Age to come. A new creation would be crafted by the Spirit (Isa 32:15). A new relationship between humanity and God would be established by the Spirit (Jer 31:31-34). The Spirit would freely be dispensed to all the people of Israel (Ezek 39:29, Joel 2:28).<sup>176</sup> The eschatological

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<sup>175</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 89.

predictions of the prophets would affect Christianity as having begun by the ascension of Christ to God's right hand.

Conclusion: The images of God's power describe various ways that God was present in human history. The divine right hand created the world, delivered the Hebrew slaves from captivity, gave victory to the Israelites in battle, and gave refuge to individuals from harm, oppression, and need. One of God's most essential roles was creator, which was described in Isaiah 48: 13 by saying, "My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens." The account that sustains Israel is the narrative of God's mighty action to rescue the Hebrews from their oppression in Egypt. Moses sang this Hymn of the Sea:

The floods covered them;  
they went down into the depths like a stone.  
Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power –  
your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. (Exod 15:5-6)

Psalm 44:3 describes the giving of the Promised Land to the Israelites: "For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm give victory; but your right hand, and your arm and the light of your countenance; for you did delight in them." The Psalms give numerous accounts of God who is responsible for victory by his right hand; there is great stress that humans are victorious only through God's help. One of these is Psalm 20:6-7:

Now I know that the Lord will help his anointed;  
he will answer him from his holy heaven  
with mighty victories by his right hand.  
Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses,  
but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God.

## The Human Right Hand

The Deuteronomist wrote with repetitive phrases, which illustrated the author's theology that when Israel followed the covenant all went well for the nation and the Israelite people. The Deuteronomist will repeat a phrase in which both the right and the left are considered negative directions. The only positive pathway is straight ahead. The Deuteronomist impressed upon its readers that one should not "turn aside to the right or to the left" from God's established ways in many of his writings (Deut 2:27; 5:32; 17:11,20; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 23:6; 2 Kgs 22:2). In this usage the people of Israel are asked to walk the straight road, which could easily be behind the English idiom of walking the straight and narrow. Turning to either to the right or left signified the turning from God's covenant, this was considered to be taking an immoral or unrighteous action. Proverbs used the phrase in a way that may have inspired the writings of the Deuteronomist: "Keep straight the path of your feet, and all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil" (Prov 4:26-27). It can be seen that when Isaiah wrote "And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it,'" he was speaking about God speaking to a person directly about corrections that need to be made in the person's life.

The last line of the book of Jonah has God speaking about the confusion of the Ninevites: "And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:11). God was concerned because the people of Nineveh had never been taught morality represented by the right hand from the

immorality symbolized by the left hand, thus they did not know their right from their left hand. The book of Jonah recorded that the people of Nineveh turned from their evil ways (Jonah 3:10) and accepted God (Jonah 3:5) when Jonah taught them the difference between God's ways from evil or good from bad.

## Chapter 3 New Testament

### The Use of Psalm 110:1

Early Christianity desired to prove that Jesus was truly the Christ by establishing that his life fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Matthew's gospel used the phrase "this fulfilled the prophecy" or slight variations of this phrase seven times (Matt 2:17; 4:14; 12:17; 13:14; 13:35; 21:4; 27:8). Luke (Luke 22:37; Acts 2:32; 13:27) and John (John 2:17; 12:14, 16) also recorded that the life of Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. New Testament authors established the Messianic heavenly kingdom of Jesus through the use of three Royal Psalms. Psalms 2, 8, and 110 were often used in conjunction with one another. Verse 7 of Psalm 2 most notably appeared in the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22) and his transfiguration (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), as God proclaims Jesus the Son of God during his earthly life. In Hebrews 1:5, Psalm 2:7 has been quoted with Psalm 110:1 to establish that God has begotten Jesus as the Son of God as he was raised to God's right hand. Acts 13:33 also quoted Psalm 2:7 of the risen Christ. Psalm 2:8-9 gave the Son of God dominion over the world and the ability to overcome the nations, breaking the nations like pottery shards. This dominion and power was similarly imparted in Psalm 110:1 by God making your [Christ's] enemies your footstool. In both Psalm 2 and 110, we can see the gift of dominion and power was given to the Son of God at his investment as king. The New Testament claimed the Sonship of God and the power over the nations for Jesus by using these two Psalms.

In the New Testament the phrase "until I make your enemies your footstool" from

Psalm 110:1 and “you have put all things under their feet” from Psalm 8:6 were mistakenly or purposely interchanged. All three Synoptic Gospels pictured Jesus teaching in the temple broadening the definition of the Messiah by giving the Messiah a larger interpretation than a “son of David,” who would be merely considered a worldly warrior prince (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43). Mark and Matthew quoted Jesus making his point by using the beginning of Psalm 110:1 with the addition of words from Psalm 8:6: “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.” Only Luke quoted Psalm 110:1: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” To put things (enemies) under one’s feet draws a very similar picture as making your enemies your footstool. These appear to be easily interchangeable.

The book of Hebrews uses Psalm 2, 8 and 110. Hebrews 2:6-9 quoted Psalm 8:4-6 to refer to everything being placed under the risen Christ’s control, yet Christ’s complete control lies in the future. The author had also quoted Psalm 110:1 “Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies a stool for your feet” (Heb 1:13). The author of Hebrews stressed that although Jesus sits at the right hand and has been crowned, complete control of all things are in the future.

Psalm 110 was seen as a prophetic utterance about the Messiah by early Christians. It is the only Psalm that used the oracular phrase “God declares” or with older phrasing “thus sayest the Lord.” Psalm 110 was used or alluded to in thirty-three texts of the New Testament. It also occurs frequently in Church liturgies and Ecclesiastical creeds. References to Christ sitting at the right hand of God forged a Christian understanding of what happened after Christ’s ascension to the Father. Jesus was no longer the compassionate human, who walked among humankind preaching and

healing. A change had occurred. He was the resurrected One who had completed his passion, his complete obedience to the will of God, and become exalted over all other creatures. Jesus Christ as he sat at God's right shared the power of God, where his divine power could be dispensed to the world, the church, and to individuals.

### **Judgment**

In the Hebrew Bible, judgment was a function of kingship. The Hebrew root of “to judge” (שֹׁפֵט) came originally from the same root as scepter (שָׁפֵט) with the change of the like consonant of b and p occurring over time.<sup>177</sup> To rule meant to judge. A king would judge between several courses of action, deciding the direction forward. Mid-eastern tradition dictated that the ruler held the scepter, the symbol of power, and sat on the throne, the place of judgment, to make important decisions. To sit on the throne indicated that the king had taken their authority and was ready to rule or the complimentary phrase to judge.<sup>178</sup> Hebrew Bible texts show both the human and divine thrones as the place of judgment: “He [God] has established his throne for judgment” (Ps 9:7; cf. Pss 9:7; 122:5; 1Kgs 7:7; Dan 7:9-10).

Intertestamental literature had several scenes of heavenly judgment though a divinely appointed agent. In the *Exagoge of Ezekiel*, Moses was promised a great throne on which he would judge and lead humankind (Ex Ez 6, 15-19). Melchizedek carried out judgment from within the divine council to defeat Bellial in the portrait of Melchizedek found in 11Q Melch 2:9-13. In this Qumran scroll, Melchizedek judged without being pictured as seated. In 1 Enoch 51:1-3, Enoch as the Elect One sat on God's throne

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<sup>177</sup> Stanley Gevirtz, “On Hebrew *šēbet* = ‘Judge.’” in *The Bible World: Essay in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed. Gary Rensburg et al. (New York: KTAV, 1980), 61-65.

<sup>178</sup> F. Charles Fensham, “The Ugaritic Root *tpt*” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 12 (1984): 64-66.

choosing the righteous to be saved. Another passage of 1 Enoch described the day of burden and tribulation, when God's Elect One sat on the seat of glory making a selection of humans by appraising their deeds. On the day of burden and tribulation, the earth would be altered to renew it as a place of blessing. No sinners were allowed to enter the new earth for this day also brought their destruction (1 Enoch 45:2-6). This image of 1 Enoch presented the judgment and renewal of the earth as very similar to the Day of the Lord in the New Testament (2 Pet 3:7-13; Rev 20:11-21:11).

The initial reason for Christ's movement to the divine throne was eschatological. Little time was thought to exist between the resurrection and the Parousia. Certainly Paul's cry of "Our Lord come!" at the end of his second letter to the Corinthians made it clear that the early Christians expected Christ's speedy return (2 Cor 16:22).<sup>179</sup> In taking the seat of glory the exalted Christ was poised and readied to judge the quick and the dead (Matt 25: 31-46; 2 Cor 5:9). The New Testament authors understood that Psalm 110:1 laid out the prophecy of a Davidide who would be enthroned at God's own right hand: "Sit at my right hand." The New Testament understood the ascension of Jesus as God's action to fulfill the prophecy. A prophecy of Psalm 110:1 originally was written to place a son of David on the earthly throne of Israel. Solomon's Hall of the Throne sat to the right or south of the Jerusalem temple, the place where God sat upon his throne.

The New Testament saw this completely differently. The Psalm called for the Lord to take his place on God's heavenly throne (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:14). The word that was used in the Septuagint to mean enthronement (2 Sam 7:12) is the same Greek word that is used in the New Testament to mean resurrection ( $\alpha\acute{v}\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) – the lifting up: Nathan in a prophecy of the enthronement of the king's ancestor told David: "When your

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<sup>179</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 217.

days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up (ἀνάστησω) your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam 7:12). In Acts 2:30-31, Luke said David "knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah." The theology of enthronement became intricately involved with resurrection for the same word in Greek described both actions.<sup>180</sup>

Paul never used the word throne, but used judgment seat. Judgment seat while not technically a throne, but was associated with earthly authority during Paul's era. Earthly Roman rulers such as Pilate, Festus the tribunal at Caesarea, and Galleo proconsul of Achaia, all had judgment seats (Matt 27:19; John 19:13; Acts 18:12, 16; 25:6, 10, 17). The judgment seat would have been the throne in the time of Israel's kings. Paul wrote that all would "stand before the judgment seat of God" (Rom 14:10b). God's throne of glory would have been the judgment seat.<sup>181</sup> Jesus would share in the Judgment: "For all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor 5:10). Also God's judgment through Christ: "God through Jesus Christ will judge the secret thoughts of all" (Rom 2:16b).

The judgment for Paul lay in eschatology at the last day. Paul asked all Christians to refrain from judging to leave judgment to the Lord when he comes (I Cor 4:5). Paul also said that he would boast of the Thessalonians in front of the coming Christ. The Thessalonians' Christian devotion would have recommended Paul on the Last Day for his

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<sup>180</sup> Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 166-167.

<sup>181</sup> Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 274-275.

faithfulness to Christ which he preached to the Christian community at Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:19).

Paul's soteriology mentioned the cultic use of Christ's blood as a sacrificial gift in Romans 3:25 and 5:9. Paul also presented Jesus as our advocate at the right hand of God to intercede for the Saints on the Day of Judgment. To understand this intercession in Romans 8:34 against the accusations of Satan, the Hebrew Bible use of the accuser at the right hand must first be understood.

Psalm 109 described an earthly court. In verse 9, satan stood to the right of the person on trial. The court systems of Israel did not appear to have been refined enough to have had a government official who held the job of district attorney. Justice in Israel was delivered in the city square or an extremely important case would be brought to a district court. A case between men of power might be brought to the highest judicial figure in Israel, the King. Though "satan" was presented with no article in Psalm 109, "satan," accuser or adversary, was a person bringing an allegation. The satan of Psalm 109 was definitely not associated with a divine accuser who brought the complaint as found in Job, or the Satan of the New Testament who opposed God. There does appear to be a tradition in a trial of Israel that the accuser stood to the right of the person accused. Psalm 109:26-27 asked for divine help as the Psalmist petitioned God to save him and to let them know that it is your hand (power) which has helped me. The Psalmist was sure that God would help him by being at his right hand to overcome the accusation: "For he [Yahweh] stands at the right hand of the needy, to save them from those who would condemn them to death" (v 31).

In the Hebrew Bible account of Zechariah 3:1, the definite article was included with “satan.” Though “the satan” has not become a proper name, the use of “the satan” meant a particular accuser of the heavenly court. This celestial figure brought an accusation against Joshua, Israel’s high priest. “The accuser” may possibly have been an office or job of one angel or member of the divine council, but most likely the accuser was any of several heavenly figures that desired to make an accusation.<sup>182</sup> As in the earthly court, the accuser stood at the right hand of Joshua. In Zechariah, Yahweh’s angel<sup>183</sup> was the judge and did not accept the accusation of the satan. Instead the angel gave the High Priest Joshua, forgiveness and mercy (Zech 3:4). The high priest Joshua was a symbolic figure that stood for the religious practices and beliefs of all the people of Israel. In purifying the high priest from sin, all of Israel received forgiveness. Only if there was an accuser could Yahweh (acting through his angel) be the source of mercy to Israel for their past religious sinfulness. The trial in Zechariah placed both the accuser and the redeemer within the godhead.

In the New Testament, Jesus intercedes in the divine court to see that mercy is given to Christians (Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1). In Romans 8:34, Jesus in his ascended position was at the right hand of God to intercede for Christians, possible to block the accusations made by Satan. If the accuser was standing at the right hand of the accused in front of God, this placed Jesus at God’s right hand in diagonal opposition to Satan.

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<sup>182</sup> Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: satan in the Hebrew Bible*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 40-43. In the New-Assyrian period, several texts described Assur, Samas, Nanay and Mar-Biti as legal adversaries to any person who would break an agreement. The goddess Sarpanitum was described as “one who accuses and intercedes favorably.” This implies that different deities could play the role of adversary or advocate in Assyria. The accuser in Zechariah 3 is one single accuser, but this might be any angel that found fault with the high priest.

<sup>183</sup> Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: satan in the Hebrew Bible*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 110. In Zechariah 3:2, the MT reads the Lord said, but most commentators have changed the Lord to the angel of the Lord for the verse uses the third person - “May Yahweh rebuke you, o accuser.”

This is a picture of what has often been found in mythology of goodness at God's right hand and evil at God's left hand.<sup>184</sup> This physical location may represent the ethical and theological opposition of the two figures. The satan, the accuser, of the Hebrew Bible retains the quality of the one who brings the indictment, but has become a proper name for the being Satan in Paul's writings (Rom 16:10; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5).

Satan is not explicitly mentioned in Romans 8:34, but this verse can be placed in the parousia certainly if compared to the later and non-Pauline text of Mark 14:62. Mark represented Christ's return on the clouds, where Jesus called himself the Son of Man coming at the right hand of Power. All were to come before the Judgment seat of God in Romans 14:10.<sup>185</sup> In Romans 8:34, Paul placed Jesus at the right hand of God where Jesus was in the position to stop Satan's accusations against Christians in the last judgment.<sup>186</sup>

In the Hebrew Bible, there was the inconsistent placement of God at the human's right hand or the human at God's right hand. In Psalm 110, God appears to change places. In the first verse of the Psalm the king is at God's right hand, but in verse five the king is at God's left for God was at the king's right hand. Both involve the right hand as though any right hand is equivalent and the actual spatial relationship remained insignificant. This interchangeability of human and divine right hands ran through out the Hebrew Bible. God could be either at the human's right hand to help them in the midst of their troubles (Pss 16:8; 110:5; 121:5), effectively putting the human at God's left hand, or God could use the divine right hand to bring victory or work on behalf of the

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<sup>184</sup> See the Egyptian myth of Seth and Horus above page 14.

<sup>185</sup> Paul also used the Judgment Seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:20, which describes the indistinct nature of the trinity in Paul. Where God and Christ can often appear replacing the other (Rom 8:9).

<sup>186</sup> David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 59-60. Hay understood Romans 8:34 to be primarily with the future judgment with Satan as accuser.

individual or Israel (Pss 20:6; 48:10; 63:8; 138:7). With either God at the human's right or the human at God's right meant that God was intimately close to provide help and support. The right as the side of goodness and power meant God's goodness as well as power to be present to the human in need of divine help.

As Paul understood the heavenly court, Jesus may speak for Christians, but God is the vindicator, the one who justifies ( $\deltaικαιων$ ) (Rom 8:32). God has the last word of judgment in Paul (Rom 2:2-3), but Paul is inconsistent and Christ is also said to judge (2 Cor 5:10). Hays wrote that "all this emphasizes not only the uniqueness of Christ's glory but also its dependence on God" for God is the true power and actor in Paul.<sup>187</sup>

The author of Hebrews used the sacrificial cult of Israel as the basis to build his soteriological understanding of Christ. In the understanding of the Jerusalem cult, God rested in the darkness of the Holy of Holies in the Hebrew Temple of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:12). Only once a year, Israel's High Priest would approach God to make atonement for the nation's sins by sprinkling the blood of the ram seven times with his finger on the mercy seat of the ark (Lev 16:11-19). The mercy seat was God's seat, also known as the throne of God (Lev 16:2). The animal whose blood was used in the sacrifice was required to be without blemish (Num 29:8).

Hebrews understood that the heavenly temple was God's actual residence with God's true throne in heaven. The heavenly temple or tent had been considered an archetype for the earthly temple in some Old Testament texts and later apocalyptic literature as well as Hebrews. The Psalms depict God's true throne and temple as being in the heavens (Pss 11:4; 103:19). In a vision, Ezekiel toured and measured a temple,

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<sup>187</sup> David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 60.

which could possibly be understood as the heavenly temple. The temple of Ezekiel's vision stood as a model for building of the earthly temple (Ezek 40 ff.). Second Enoch 55:2 spoke of the heavenly Jerusalem in which God resided. At Qumran the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice depicted a heavenly throne-chariot upon which God sat with the cherubim worshiping God (4Q405 20-21-22, 6-9).

In the book of Hebrews, Christ entered the heavenly "true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up" (Heb 8:2), but prior to this entry, Christ had been perfected made without blemish. An essential part of Jesus' journey to the right hand of God came in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the Garden, Jesus cried and prayed to the one who could save him (5:7). Jesus manifested his humanity in a desire not to die. "He learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (5:8b-9). He chose obedience to God's will not his own and went to his death. He developed and grew in his obedience, thus he was perfected as one without blemish.<sup>188</sup>

On the cross, Jesus was slaughtered providing the sacrificial blood. Jesus entered the curtain of the heavenly Holy of Holies, where he sat down at the right hand of God sharing the throne with God. He brought his own blood as the sacrificial blood. He was both the sacrifice and as the high priest the one who sacrificed. Jesus did not sprinkle the blood with his finger but sprinkled it on the seat by sitting. His blood brought forgiveness of sins once and for all (9:12). The once-and-for-all aspect of the sacrifice could be made both because he was a superior sacrifice and a superior priest after the order of Melchizedek.

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<sup>188</sup> Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 94.

Using the fourth verse of Psalm 110, Hebrews recounted God's appointment of Jesus as a priest: "Yahweh has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" The author of Hebrews understood that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham by saying "the inferior is blessed by the superior" (7:7). Genesis 14 gives little information to help us understand who Melchizedek was and what he represented, except that Melchizedek as priest of God most high and king of Salem blessed Abraham. Salem meant peace, which made Melchizedek the king of peace. Looking to the Qumran text 11Q Melchizedek, Melchizedek's name was interspersed with the angel Michael as though they were the same being. According to the Qumran text, Melchizedek would carry out El's judgments by turning the wicked over to Belial and by redeeming the elect from the burden "of all their iniquities" in the last days. In the Qumran text, Melchizedek had a heavenly position, as an angel, one of the divine council who carried out God's directives.<sup>189</sup> If the Jewish authors at the time of the writing of Hebrews saw Melchizedek as an angel, this would explain why Hebrews described Melchizedek as having "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (7:3).

When Jesus became a priest after the order of Melchizedek, he was bringing together the role of king as a Davidide and a priest. As Melchizedek also had both roles as king of Salem and priest, so Jesus would be king of peace and ruled through mercy. A heavenly king/priest was obviously much superior to any earthly king or priest. Even the quality of "forever" placed Jesus in a category of existence beyond nature, anything of the earth. Jesus was a God-appointed priest in the order of Melchizedek, while earthly priests received their positions by being born a Levite. Only as a priest of Melchizedek, a

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<sup>189</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, *One God One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 79.

priest superior to the Levitical priesthood, would Jesus be in a position to affect a sacrifice that would atone for sin and bring a new covenant.

In the exaltation, Jesus became a priest and messiah forever. The eternal nature of Jesus indicated that he has changed into a “heavenly” being. Yet, would Jesus need human blood to affect the sacrifice? If he needed human blood, this would present a circular argument, for he must be a priest forever transformed into a heavenly being before he presented himself as the human sacrifice. Once exalted, Jesus must have been changed: “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels” (Heb 1:3b-4a). Only “heavenly” blood could bring about eternal atonement, a catalyst upon the throne that could never be removed. The body of Jesus that sat upon the throne of heaven was of a heavenly, eternal nature. Yet the body was anthropometric, it could effect a sitting position.

Hebrews departed from Paul’s writings. The act of atonement happened not at the cross, but in exaltation at the moment of the session. The author of Hebrews used Psalm 10:1 as the central piece of his soteriology: “Sit at my right hand” upon my throne until I “make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (1:13 cf. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). Hebrews understood that Jesus not only made atonement for human sin forever, but was raised to the seat of power.

Mark portrayed the end as coming when the gospel has been preached to all nations (Mark 13:10). Those that endure to the end will be saved (v 13). The heavenly ruler, the Son of Man will come “in clouds with great power and glory” (v 26). The judgment begins with the coming of Christ then the elect will be collected: “Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to

the ends of heaven" (v 27). The gathering of the elect in Mark was similar to the gathering of the righteous that took place in 2 Barach 30:1-5. In Second Barach, at the glorious return of the Anointed One the treasuries of the righteous souls are opened to assemble with the multitude of the righteous on earth. The wicked will waste away upon seeing Christ's return.

In Mark 13:10, it was necessary for the good news to be preached to all nations before Christ's return. Yet, in Mark 14:62 those present, the contemporaries of Christ, would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds at the right hand of Power. This meant a much quicker return for Jesus than the delay needed to preach the gospel to all people of the globe. Mark's Gospel contains an inconsistency between these two pieces of scripture. When will the Son of Man return after the good news has been preached throughout the world or in the life time of Jesus' contemporaries? A reason for the inconsistency might be the difference between Mark's reporting the words of Jesus which claimed an imminent return and those of the Gospel writer who found it necessary to prolong the return as the contemporaries of Jesus began to die.

The Gospel of Matthew placed much more emphasis on God's judgment of humans than the other Synoptics. In Matthew 5:21-22, not only those who murdered, but those who were angered by another person faced judgment for their actions. If one said "You fool," they were "liable to the hell (Gehenna) fire" after the judgment. An individual must account for every careless word on the day of Judgment (Matt 12:36). A negative decree would be made on the "day of Judgment" for entire households and cities that showed no repentance (Matt 10:11-15; 11:21-25).

Matthew not only warned humans of the negative behavior that would bring them into undesirable judgment, but he also gave descriptions of Christ's return. Christ, titled "Son of Man" would return to take his throne for the judgment. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another" (Matt 25:31-32). The title the Son of Man coming from Daniel 7 was used for Jesus especially in relation to the Parousia and Judgment: "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done" (Matt 16:27). The other two Synoptics leave out the phrase that Matthew used to signify judgment - "he will repay everyone for what has been done." Matthew placed much more emphasis on the judgment than Mark and Luke. He used judgment 8 times (Matt 5:21, 22; 7:1-2; 11:22, 24, 36; 12:41, 42).

Luke followed Mark and Q to talk of Jesus as the Son of Man in his Gospel scenes of the return of Jesus in glory. Luke never employed the title Christ in his Gospel. Peter acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah of God (Luke 9:20) rather than the Greek word Christ, which Luke used extensively of the exalted Jesus in Acts. Luke claimed in Acts 2:36 God made him Lord and Messiah in the Exaltation. Luke has Paul say in Acts that "he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

## Intercession

Though Jesus would intervene during the Last Judgment for the Saints, he was also interceding for his own in the present.<sup>190</sup> Just before the passage of the exalted Christ's intercession in Romans 8:34, Paul has just spoken of the intercession of the Spirit for the Saints according to the will of God (Rom 8:26, 27). Second Corinthians 3:17 said "Now the Lord is the Spirit." The Spirit could be called the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:17; Phil 1:19), but the Spirit could be called the Spirit of God (Rom 8:9, 14; 15:19; 1 Cor 2:11). In the same verse Paul wrote of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (8:9) setting up an equivalence of a sort that both were divine and the sender of the Spirit. There was little distinction of the functioning of the Godhead in Paul. The Spirit intervening for the Saints is Christ at the right hand of God intervening for the Saints. The exalted Christ, Holy Spirit, and God are differentiated, yet each can carry out identical functions in Paul.

The book of Hebrews had two main purposes, which both dependent upon Christ's presence at the right hand of God. The first stood as a singular act of salvation, a one time completion of the saving event. The other represented the on-going reality of an intercessor. The first explained the sacrificial nature of Christ's death which provided atonement for human sin, that discourse is above. The second clarified Christ's new position as mediator between humanity and God. Christ's empathy for human frailties came because he had experienced all the temptations of human life (Heb 2:18; 4:15). The exalted Christ intervened for humans in the eternal present (2:18; 4:14-16). Christ's helps those who are in need of mercy for their iniquities and those who are being

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<sup>190</sup> W. R. G. Loader, "Christ at the Right Hand – Ps. CX 1 in the New Testament." *New Testament Studies* 24: 205.

threatened to give up their faith. Christ provided support to keep going in the midst of turmoil and temptation. Part of Jesus' function as high priest was his role as intercessor. The role of an earthly priest was to stand in the middle between earth and heaven offering sacrifices in the proper way to receive the removal of human iniquity. The exalted Christ brought immediate access to God for all human requests (7:25).

Hebrews understood that a period of time existed between the exaltation and the parousia. Hebrews looked forward to a Day of Judgment (10:25) in which God would be the judge (12:23). Those who kept the Christian faith would keep the purity of their baptism in which their sins were purified (10:22). The fate of those who fell away would be a fury of fire (10:27).

## Power

In the Hebrew Bible, the divine hand and right hand symbolized the power of God to be involved in the world, the means of God's immanence. Through God's hand all things were created, guidance and protection were provided for God's people, and the prophets were inspired. In the New Testament Luke uses the symbolism of God's hand for immanent action within history. The only other author that used the hand of God will be the author of Hebrews, which will be looked at later. A short survey of Luke and Acts will show Luke's usage of divine power. Creation by the divine hand was described in Acts 7:50 as God asked "Did not my hand make all these things?"<sup>191</sup> The classic prophets were inspired when God's hand was upon them to see visions and receive God's

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<sup>191</sup> The hand parallels the right hand in poetry of Isaiah and the Psalms, which confirms that hand and right hand carry almost identical meaning. The right hand differs little from the hand, but when used together the right hand may carry the additional sense of goodness or righteousness. In Isaiah 63:8, God's hand created the earth, while God's right hand spread out heaven. The right hand was used for the more spiritual and perfect of God's creation.

word. The Old Testament phrases of God's hand falling on the prophets and then being withdrawn described God's inspiration as coming and leaving at God's discretion. The phrase made it known that the prophetic power belonged to God and not to humans.

In Luke 1:66, on the occasion of the circumcision of the infant John, who would be known as the Baptist, onlookers said that God's hand was with the infant John. The people noted the constant presence of God's hand on John, as a mark of what intensity the child would display as a prophet: "All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him." This was unlike the hand of God that fell quickly upon the Old Testament Prophets to be quickly removed. The constant hand of God upon John, even as an infant, made every action and thought of John prophetic. John the Baptist had prophetic strength beyond what had been given to any of his predecessors.

Jesus' last words on the cross have more depth when it is noted that Jesus gave his spirit into God's hands, which was God's power to bring about the resurrection: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Into God's power that created the world (Acts 7:50) and brought about the entire predestined life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 4:28), Jesus give his Spirit. In Acts 4:24-30 Peter's prayer twice describes how the power of God's hand both brought about the resurrection of Jesus and later the cure of individuals by the apostles:

For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

Peter and John had healed a lame man in the gate of the temple, prior to the prayer. The hand of God was power of God's immanence through which he affected the world. Hull called the hand of God "the Spirit of God, whose power was not confined to any one particular channel."<sup>192</sup> Most simply stated the hand of God is God's power used in any way he saw fit.

"The power of the hand" that once resided only with God was given to Jesus Christ in his exaltation at God's right hand as though by sitting at God's right hand, the exalted Jesus acquired "the power of the hand." Luke will use the symbol of the hand after the exaltation for the power of the risen Christ. In these following passages the hand of the Lord is the hand of Jesus Christ. After witnessing the martyrdom of Stephen, individuals from Cyprus and Cyrene began the Church at Antioch among the Hellenists: "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21). This same usage is apparent in Acts 13:9-11. Paul told a magician that the Lord's hand was against him for a while for trying to turn the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, against faith in Jesus Christ: "'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now listen—the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun.'"

The author of Hebrews followed the Old Testament usage of God's hand, but the author places hand in the plural. The hands of God create the heavens: "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" (Heb 1:10). Hebrews warns those that spurn the Son of God that they will fall into God's power to

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<sup>192</sup> J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1968), 141.

judge (God not Christ is the judge in Hebrews)<sup>193</sup>: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31).

Christ’s healed primarily through touch in all the Gospels. Christ’s hands project a healing power or strength. “As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them” (Luke 4:40). Each of the four gospels records healing as Jesus laid his hand on the person with a malady: “‘Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.’ He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed” (Matt 8:2b-3). “Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly” (Mark 8:25). “He [Jesus] spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see” (John 9:6-7). The written account does not tell us that power passed out of Jesus’ hand to cure the illness, but we could infer that there was a transfer of power to those ill from his hand to their body. Luke 6:19 recorded: “All in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.” In the case of the woman who had hemorrhaged for twelve years, Luke wrote that Jesus felt the loss of power, when the ill woman touched his cloak. With the touch of Jesus’ cloak, the woman received power from Jesus and was healed (Luke 5:27-34). Jesus could cure from a great distance without touch (Matt 8:13), but laying his hand on a person left no doubt that Jesus was the source of the person’s restoration of health. Also, the touch of Jesus made his relationship with each person compassionate and intimate. The power of the earthly

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<sup>193</sup> In the Johannine tradition, all judgment is given to Jesus Christ (John 5:27).

Jesus differed from the power of the exalted Christ. The worldly Jesus healed one to one, but the exalted Christ has a greater power to pour forth the Spirit and affect groups, both physically and spiritually.

“The hand of God” or “the right hand of God” symbolized God’s power in the Hebrew Bible (Exod 15:6; Isa 41:13; 48:13) and Luke (Luke 1:66; Acts 4:30; 7:50). Mark and Matthew did not use the symbol except when using the phrase from Psalm 110:1 “the right hand of God (Power)” (Matt 22:41-45, 26:63-66; Mark 12:35-36, 14:60-64, 16:19-20). When Jesus stood before the High Priest and the council, Mark reported that Jesus responded to the High Priest by saying, “You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power” (Mark 14:62). Mark used “the Power” as the hypostasis for God. The phrase with its symbol replaced by the symbol’s meaning would read “sits at the power of Power.” Mark may not have understood the Hebrew Bible’s symbolism, which would explain why he did not use the symbol of God’s hand in other places in his Gospel. His lack of knowledge would have caused the redundancy. In contrast, Mark may have desired to stress the power by twice stating it.

In the three Synoptic Gospels, Jesus declared that the parousia was coming quickly upon his death in his response to the High Priest. Jesus was returning in power to judge the world. Those assembled would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds seated at God’s right hand. Jesus might humbly have been referring to himself as the Son of Man, merely another term for a human, but his words were actually using to great effect Daniel’s vision in which “one like a son of man” was seen coming with the clouds of heaven (Dan 7:13). Jesus truly was raising a threatening picture of himself. The vision of Daniel 7:9-14 described God’s judgment of punishment for the beast and reward for

the Son of Man in which the Son of Man was granted everlasting kingship and authority over all nations. In his short answer, Jesus combined two texts of enthronement, Daniel's vision with Psalm 110:1. The Chief Priest understood completely calling Jesus' remarks blasphemous. Matthew and Luke made the enthronement immediate upon the death of Jesus by adding "from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of power."<sup>194</sup> Luke perhaps realizing that the Parousia was delayed removed Jesus' coming on the clouds (Luke 22:69), retaining Jesus' seat at God's right.

The name expected in Mark's passage of the one seated at God's right hand would be "my Lord" drawing from Psalm 110:1 or "the Son of God" drawing on the knowledge that the firstborn son of the monarch in Egypt sat on his father's throne (Exod 11:5, 12:29). The firstborn son received part of the monarch's power as co-regent. Mark wanted it known that Jesus shared the power of God by his seat next to the divine right hand. What we find instead is "Son of Man," which agrees with the claim that Mark drew on Daniel 7 for this passage. As mentioned above there is no use of "the right hand of God" as the symbolism for God's power in the gospels of Mark and Matthew. These passages appear to be dropped into Mark's work from a prior source.

We can speculate that Jesus actually did first use Psalm 110:1 as reported in Mark 12:36, Matt 22:44, and Luke 20:42. This would mean that Jesus described the Messiah as my Lord who sits at the right hand of God. The argument of Jesus in these passages is very peculiar, which is one of the reasons this text in Mark might be seen as arising from a genuine memory of Jesus. Jesus was arguing that Messiah would not need to be the son of David. Jesus appears to be arguing against himself, who indeed was of the lineage of David. But Jesus instead was arguing that the Messiah would not be in the pattern of a

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<sup>194</sup> The two authors used different Greek words for "from now on."

Davidic Messiah, a worldly warrior monarch. This type of Messiah is far too limiting. Jesus had a reign much more significant and exalted in mind. The Messiah would sit at right hand of the heavenly throne of God.

### The Exaltation

The Hebrew word for exalted is **עֶלְיוֹן**, which can be used both as a noun and an adjective. The common meaning of the word **עֶלְיוֹן** is high, but it is often associated with the highest or upper place. David is highest or most exalted of all rulers in Ps 89:27. The word is used in the Hebrew Bible as the name of God, especially combined with other divine names as *el*, *olam*, and the tetragramaton. In Gen 14:18 Melchizedek was described as the priest of **אֱלֹהִים עֶלְיוֹן** which has been translated God Most High in the RSV. This could be further translated as God who exists at the highest location, beyond all other existence. Include in the understanding of the word can be found the idea of high status, implying awe and praise as in Deut 26:19: “for him to set you [Israel] high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor.” The Old Testament’s other mention of Melchizedek came within Psalm 110:4, which was significant in the New Testament. The book of Hebrews described the risen Christ as having been entered into the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:10) by God, the order of the Most Exalted God.

When the LXX translated **עֶלְיוֹן**, the authors used the word **ὑψιστὸς** (the highest, the most exalted), but they also translated other Hebrew words for God (רוּם and **מְרוּם**) that were associated with loftiness as **ὑψιστὸς**. In the Septuagint, **ὑψιστὸς** is always used as the divine name. This use of the name was still related to the location of God as

the Hebrew had also done. The use of the word was to specify that the place of God, which was far above all other existence.<sup>195</sup>

The power of exaltation comes from God alone. Others were exalted to the position of seated in God's presence. In Jewish writings, Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, the Messiah, Enoch-Son of Man, Enoch-Metatron are said to sit in God's company. Enoch sat to receive revelation of the end times (Jub. 4:20; T. Ab. 11:3-8; 2 En. 24:1-3). Adam and Abraham witnessed the judgment (T. Ab. 10-12). Abraham received a seat at the left and the Messiah on the right (Midrash Ps 18.9), at the time of the Messiah's seating. Qumran text describe that the Messiah was seated as the first of the kings among the righteous in heaven (4Q 491 1.13-17). Another text from Qumran seated David before God on Israel's throne (4Q 504 frag. 2 IV.6). Abel presided as a temporary judge in the end (T. Ab. 13:2). The placement of these individuals gave honor for righteous behavior, but the power of a co-regent was never granted any of these exalted individuals

Enoch-Metatron was given great power over heaven, but for his misuse of this authority he was disciplined (3 En. 3-16). Only Enoch-Son of Man was portrayed as seated next to God. He was given the power to judge at the eschatology (1 En. 45:3; 51:3; 61:2-6; 70:27; 71:1-17). The book of Enoch was held in high authority by many early Christians. Tertullian defended Jude as authoritative because it referred to Enoch (Jude 14 quoted En. 7:9).

If God was known as ὑψιστὸς in the Old Testament, can we say that Christ became God upon his exaltation. Clearly others were exalted and sat in the presence of

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<sup>195</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley ,Vol. VIII. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 615-618.

God in Jewish literature. The New Testament never refers to Jesus as ὑψιστὸς. This word is used in Acts 7:48 for the highest heaven. In Luke 1:35, 76, the word was used for God. Jesus' exaltation in itself does not make him God, but his position at the right hand of God in the exaltation will give him the power of God. An antithetical use of the highest heaven to which Jesus arises is being drawn with the earth. Jesus will no longer be earthbound, but be exalted. Jesus is raised not only to the highest heaven, but to the place of God's power and authority by his sharing of God's throne for the throne upon which God sits in many Hebrew Bible passages is also associated with height, the highest heaven (Ps 103:9, Isa 6:1, Ezek 1:26).

Jesus' exaltation expressed the position of Jesus movement from the humility of earth to the loftiness of God. The exaltation draws a picture of Jesus who now has been drawn away from the falseness of earth with its temptation, pain, and sin. The exaltation draws a duality of positions. Jesus has left the sin and hubris of the earth for the purity and humility of heaven. Heb 7:26 presents Jesus' exaltation as directly juxtaposed to the earth: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens."

Acts 2:14-36: Peter's speech provided an explanation of the unique things that were happening to the disciples on that particular Pentecost. The disciples were speaking in other languages with tongues of fire resting upon them. A crowd gathered around them and heard them speaking in their native languages. Those gathered have witnessed to the descent of the Spirit in a way that was new and completely different than previously experienced. Prior to the Pentecost of the gathered saints, the gift of the prophetic spirit was given only to individuals not poured out on a group, your "sons

and daughters.” Peter draws a direction connection between the outpouring of the Spirit and Jesus’ position at the right hand of God. The Old Testament prophets gave their revelations through the “hand of the Lord.” Jesus has assumed the place at God’s hand, where he was given the pour of the hand to pour forth the Spirit to the many. Jesus’ position made it possible for the church to be a prophetic church.

Peter must make it clear that Jesus was the one resurrected. Only through Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation could the gift of the Holy Spirit be given. Peter used Psalm 16 written by David to claim that Jesus was the one not abandoned to Hades or whose flesh never saw corruption. He desires to let it be known that the prophet David foresaw Jesus as the relative of David who would take the eternal throne as the risen Messiah. As Jesus’ resurrection to God’s right hand gave him honor as well as authority. Luke described this new position as attainment of the names “Lord” and “Messiah” (Acts 2:36).

Certain texts in the writings of Paul, the earliest author of the New Testament, reflect pre-Pauline Christianity. Paul may have had reason to believe that the Christian community in Rome was composed of Jewish Christians. He opened his letter to them with an established formula.<sup>196</sup> In Romans 1:3-4, Paul spoke of “the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was appointed<sup>197</sup> to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead.” This statement presented a two stage Christianity in which Jesus could claim an

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<sup>196</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 10. “The verses are composed with even more care than the rest of the prescript, as may be seen especially from the antithetical parallelism, the use of the participle, and the typically Semitic placing of the verb first.”

<sup>197</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 12. The verb “appointed” is a change from the RSV translation of “declared.” Käsemann pointed out that the verb meant “appoint.”

earthly messiahship according to his fleshly ancestry and after his resurrection Jesus would be appointed as the heavenly Son of God. The enthronement and exaltation became the moment of beginning, when Jesus was appointed as the divine Son (reflected as well in Acts 2:36). In Romans 1:4, an allusion to Psalm 2:7 (“You are my son, today I have begotten you”) can be detected. Romans 1:3-4 probably reflected a Christology that did not believe that Jesus was pre-existence.<sup>198</sup>

This appears to be inconsistent with Paul’s understanding of Jesus as God’s Son prior to his resurrection and exaltation. But did Paul understand Jesus as pre-existent? We must look at Philippians 2:6-11, the classic passage in which Paul appeared to be stating that Christ existed as divine before taking human form. Dunn believed that a mind which has been constantly influenced with the idea of incarnation will naturally understand this passage as saying that Jesus was pre-existent, co-equal with God. This pre-existent state can be seen as “a presupposition rather than a conclusion.”<sup>199</sup>

Dunn used Adam Christology to understand Philippians 2:6-11. Paul referred to Adam and Christ as contrasts in several of his letters (Rom 5:19; 1 Cor 15:22; 45-47). This can be seen as an outline of a two stage Christology – first the acceptance of Jesus the lot of the fallen Adam who brought death into the world and secondly with Jesus as the risen exalted Christ who overcame death to bring the life-giving Spirit. The hymn contains a correlation between Jesus and Adam, or as Dunn wrote “the first stage of

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<sup>198</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 12.

<sup>199</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 114.

Christ's odyssey is depicted as equivalent to Adam.<sup>200</sup> Paul said in Romans 5:24 that "Adam who is a type of the one who was to come."

Dunn sees Adam being spoken of as a type of Christ in Philippians 2:6-7. Adam was created "in the form of God," which was the image of God. The form of God which Adam possessed was immortality (Rom 1:23; Wis 2:23) as God is immortal. Genesis 3:22 did not consider him immortal, but God knew he could attain immortality easily by eating from the Tree of Life (Gen 3:22). Adam did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped and he became in the likeness of men. By Adam's disobedience of God, death and sin came into the world (Gen 3:17-19). Adam became a dying human. When Jesus came in human form instead of making the same mistake as Adam, he was obedient even to death on the cross. Christ's obedience brought life. Paul can be found to be contrasting the disobedience of Adam with the obedience of Christ in Romans 5:19 as well as this passage of Philippians 2. From Christ's obedience came his exaltation to the heights and "bestowed on him the name over every name...Lord" (Phil 2:9).<sup>201</sup> Paul spoke of as the exaltation in Philippians 2:9 as the enthronement of Jesus at God's right hand in other contexts (Rom 8:34' I Cor 15:24-27).

Philippians 2:6-11 described God's movement toward human salvation. Adam was considered a type of Christ. Adam had the divine image, which he lost. Jesus came as a slave, a human (both Matthew and Mark see Jesus without pre-existence) who through his obedience became exalted. "Being in the form of God" and "becoming in the

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<sup>200</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 119.

likeness of men,” does not necessitate the concept of pre-existence,<sup>202</sup> but spoke of the problem brought upon humanity by Adam and was resolved by Jesus Christ. Even if Paul did believe Christ Jesus to be pre-existent, Paul does understand the moment of exaltation as the moment of receiving a name above every other name, Lord. Lord which is God’s own name. Christ Jesus has assumed divinity in the exaltation at the right hand of God.

If Jesus was not considered pre-existent by Paul, then Romans 1:3-4 presented not only a formula passed to Paul, but one in which he believed. Dunn believed that there were two possibilities presented in Romans 1:3-4 for the Sonship of Jesus:

*“The resurrection of Jesus was regarded as of central significance in determining his divine sonship, either as his installation to a status and prerogative not enjoyed before, or as a major enhancement of a sonship already enjoyed.”*<sup>203</sup>

If as in the second choice the sonship of Jesus was heightened at that moment, Jesus may have been considered the Son of God in his earthly life as exemplified by his prayers to Abba and by the fact that all Sons of David might be understood as Sons of God. With either choice, Jesus received a new status “appointed the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4).

Romans 1:3-4 described the enthronement of Jesus as the Son of God in power without using the text from Psalm 110:1. The text in Romans implies that Jesus became the companion of God upon the throne. From the throne, he was able to exercise divine power that he received through the Holy Spirit at his resurrection. Later in Romans, Paul

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<sup>202</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 114-119.

<sup>203</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 34-35.

will refer to Jesus Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, where he interceded for the believer (8:34).

Paul knew Psalm 110:1 but he used it infrequently. Paul may have included this text in his letter to the Romans because the session seemed to have significance for the Christianity of the people of Rome. Christian writers with a connection to Rome used the session at the right hand of God more frequently than others. The text can be found in Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 1 Clement, as well as the Deutero-Pauline letter to the Colossians. The Gospel of Mark had traditions of being based on the reflections of Peter.<sup>204</sup> Luke obviously has a connection to the city of Rome. He ends the book of Acts with Paul teaching in Rome. Luke used the text of Psalm 110:1 in important sections of Acts when he desired to explain the exaltation of Christ (Acts 2:33-35; 5:31; and in the vision of Stephen Acts 7:55-56).<sup>205</sup> The resurrected Jesus at the right hand of God came to be permanently established as a central part of Christianity in *The Roman Creed*.

The last words of Romans 1:4, Jesus Christ our Lord, reflect Paul's repeated understanding of the resurrected Jesus as Lord (Rom 4:29; 5:1; 10:9; Phil 2:11; 1 Thess 5:9; 1 Cor 12:3). The resurrected Lord was raised with power as the last Adam who was a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). At the parousia, the risen Lord now has the power to give believers a body of glory, like his own body (Rom 5:2; 8:29-30). For Paul, the resurrected one was the Lord of Glory (1 Cor 2:8) with the power to transform the Christian with his glory (2 Cor 3:18) for Christ reflected the glory of God (2 Cor 4:6). A body of glory would be synonymous with the spiritual body (1 Cor 15:43-45): "It is

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<sup>204</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1985), 28-54.

<sup>205</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 158.

sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.... It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

The memories of early preaching were probably the basis for the sermon of Peter given on Pentecost. In Acts 2:14-36, Peter described the resurrection of Jesus as the beginning of the eschaton. Peter indicated that David had predicted the rise of Jesus to the right hand of God and quoted Psalm 110:1 as proof. Jesus was now in a unique relationship to God, having become co-regent with God and assuming power. Luke ended Peter’s sermon by his declaration of new titles given to the exalted Jesus: “God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Dunn felt that the sermon was typical of early Christology: “For first-century Christians generally this was a title [Lord] Jesus received on exaltation by virtue of his resurrection.”<sup>206</sup>

In Acts 13:33, Luke used the full sentence from Psalm 2:7 “you are my Son today I have begotten you” to describe the new status of Jesus at the resurrection. Part of this sentence had already been used by Luke at the baptism of Jesus, “You are my Son, the Beloved” (Luke 3:22). Gabriel also predicted to Mary that “he will be called Son of God” (Luke 1: 35). Was Jesus the Son of God from his conception, at his baptism, or at his resurrection? Luke was willing to include all the Christian traditions side by side as though they did not contradict one another. Perhaps they did not disagree with one another. The Son was not pre-existent in Luke’s Gospel. The being of Jesus began at his conception by the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary. Luke understood Jesus to be the Son of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit at his conception. The relationship of Jesus with God grew at his baptism as he began his

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<sup>206</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 181.

ministry. His relationship with God prospered and grew to his position at God's right hand with eternal exaltation and glory.

New titles were given Jesus at his exaltation, which recognized his holding of new power. We have seen that Romans 1:4 declared that the resurrected Jesus had become Son of God with power. The power of death was not able to hold Jesus (Acts 2:24). By God's power, death's dominion was broken. Hebrews 7:16 described the risen Christ as having the power of an indestructible life. He had overcome mortality and the world's distortions and iniquity. First Corinthians 1:24 declared Christ to be the power of God in the absolute (δύναμις θεοῦ). Hebrews 1:3 described the risen Christ as "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word."

Clearly the claims to Christ's power increased as time passed. In Paul's writings the victory over the powers had not yet come. Christ's reign was temporary to be given back to God, when all the powers were defeated (1 Cor 15:25). In Matthew 28:18, all authority had been given to Jesus. Though all authority was his, this said nothing about his victory over his enemies. We would project that victory in the future. In Hebrews 10:12, Jesus sat at God's right hand waiting for all his enemies to be made a footstool for his feet. Hebrews also presented a not yet situation. In Ephesians 1:20 in contrast to Hebrews, God had already put all things under his feet. Christ's absolute power has come about to benefit the church (1:22). In 1 Peter 3:22, Jesus sits at the right hand of God, "with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him." In 1 Peter, Jesus has overcome the powers.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28: Leading up to Paul's discussion of Christ's reign, he wrote of a series of resurrections. The end result of the resurrections would be that "all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22) with a stress on the word *παντες* throughout the passage. God resurrected Christ after his death as the first fruits of the dead. The next to be raised will be those who belong to him at the Parousia. The end and final resurrection would come at the destruction of every ruler, authority, and power (v. 24). With the defeat of death (v. 27), all would be made alive in a speculative final resurrection. Christ reigns with full authority from the time of his resurrection. Here, there is no mention of the kingdom of Christ starting at the Parousia for he reigns now. The God has given all power and authority to the Son for the task of subjugating all his enemies under his feet (v. 25). Verse 25 called for the enemies to be subjugated to Christ. Subjugation was not the destruction called for in verse 24. Unless the destruction of the enemies' power and not their being, left them subjugated to Christ. This destruction of power might describe the turning of the enemies into allies. Only with realignment of disobedient ones to God could they become part of the "all in all". The future when Christ hands over the kingdom is when all are a part of God. Christ has assumed a not yet position. Christ reigns with all God's power and authority at his disposal to overcome the demonic forces, but they have not yet been made powerless. When this is accomplished Christ will return the kingdom to God.

In 1 Cor 15: 22-26, the exalted Christ reigns. Christ's actions will determine the end of the demonic powers. Hebrews 10:12-13 followed the text of Psalm 110:1, which called for God to act against the enemies. In these verses of Hebrews, Christ sat passively waiting for God to place his adversaries under his feet. Christ has acted to

make the lasting sacrifice for sin. It would appear his work has been accomplished.

Christ now awaited God's actions.

In Ephesians 1:19-23, emphasis was placed upon the work of God who raised and seated Christ. At the resurrection, God put all things under Christ's feet. Paul described a gradual process in which Christ himself must overcome the powers and authorities to eventually place everything under his feet (1 Cor 15:25). There is no gradual accumulation of power and authority in Ephesians 1:22, but instantaneously all things are given by God. Some theologians will limit these powers to those over the church, but the text claims that all things were given.

1 Peter 3:18-22, baptism saves a person through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was put to death in the body, but made alive in the spirit (v. 18). This is a contrast between earthly matter and heavenly spirit. Jesus has gone into heaven (v. 22). The heavens were believed to have several layers in which the lower levels were considered the place of the demonic spirits and the place of imprisonment of the disobedient angelic spirits.<sup>207</sup> As Jesus traveled in the ascension Christ made his announcement to the disobedient spirits. The judgment of the angelic beings at the time of the flood was included in 1 Peter as a warning to disobedient and unbelieving human beings of the future judgment of (1 Pet 1:17). The disobedient spirits of v. 19 corresponds to the angels of v. 22. They are joined by the verb πορευθεὶς (having gone or traveled). Christ having traveled he announced to the disobedient ones in v. 19.<sup>208</sup> By his exaltation

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<sup>207</sup> The Israelite flood tradition includes the disobedience of angels that had intercourse with human women (I En. 6:1-8; 9:7-8; Jub. 7:21; T. Reu. 5:6). "The Watchers departed from nature's order; the Lord produced a curse on them at the Flood. On their account he ordered that the earth be without dweller or produce" (T. Naph. 3:5).

<sup>208</sup> John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. Mark Smith (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 657-658.

to the right hand of God he received a place of dominance over the cosmic powers. In 1 Peter the three cosmic powers, called angels, authorities and powers, would be considered demonic forces who abode in the lower heavens. A similar listing can be found in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 1:3 as the prince of this world, and his angels, and his authorities, and his powers.

The idea of a Son of David being raised not to earthly power, but to heavenly power could not have been understood by Judaism.<sup>209</sup> A heavenly kingdom for Jesus was an invention of early Christianity or possibly by Jesus himself. The resurrection needed explanation. The appearances of the resurrected Jesus were not enough to explain what Jesus was doing after those appearances. The Christology of a resurrected Jesus who reigned in heaven needed a scriptural base which was found in Psalm 110:1.

When Christians first believed in Christ's enthronement, the throne was thought to be a throne of judgment for Jesus was returning quickly in the Parousia. But very soon, Christ's seated position at God's right hand became a place of intercession for human. Only seated at the right hand of God did Jesus receive the power and position to intercede for humans and provide them with power to ignore temptation and build the church.

Christ was a heavenly king. He had glory, a throne (Heb 8:1;12:2) even a scepter (Heb 1:8), but no crown or gold. Christ's throne was a symbol of judgment and power. The scepter portrayed power. The most powerful symbol was Jesus' presence at the right hand of God.

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<sup>209</sup> Howard Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1983), 90. Judaism provided examples of humans raised to sit in the presence of God, but these retained their human characteristics. In *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, Moses had a dream in which he was enthroned in heaven with a host of stars falling upon their knees in front of him (fragment 6, lines 15-19). Enoch was enthroned and became the angel Metatron, but was never divine or Son of God (3 Enoch 3-15).

## The Coming of the Spirit

The choice of Pentecost as the Day of the coming of the Holy Spirit had deep significance. The other names drawn from the Hebrew Bible for Pentecost were the Feast of Weeks (Exod 34:22), the Feast of the Harvest (Exod 23:16), and the Day of the First-Fruits (Num 28:26). The Feast of the Harvest signified the end of the ripening season, when all the wheat had been cut and gathered. Two loaves of bread baked from the new wheat were waved before the Lord. The offering of the loaves at Pentecost completed the Passover sheaf-offering that was made at Easter.<sup>210</sup> Just as the bread offering completed the Passover offering, so the work of the Easter Resurrection was completed on Pentecost. The gathering of the disciples had taken place in the upper room, where they prayed and prepared for this day (Acts 1:13-14). Their faith had been ripened on the forty days that Jesus had walked with them teaching them (Acts 1:3). As Jesus had been the sacrifice on Passover, so the Holy Spirit sent on Feast of the Harvest would make the disciples part of the Body of Christ, the Easter sacrifice. From the day of Pentecost, the disciples sacrificed their lives, both figuratively and actually.

The Day of Pentecost was also called the Day of the First-Fruits. Though Luke did not use the idea of the gift of the Spirit as the first fruits, the concept can be found in Paul. The Spirit was called the first-fruits in Romans 8:23. As believers were waiting for their bodies to be redeemed in the general resurrection, the Spirit was working in them now to bring them closer to God and help them in their weakness. Those who had the Spirit of Christ in them would be raised in the general resurrection and would be given life (Rom 8:9-11). The Spirit was the first fruit of what would become complete

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<sup>210</sup> J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co.k, 1968), 50.

redemption. The Day of the First Fruits (Pentecost) brought the first step, the first fruits of the Spirit that assured their resurrection if they allowed the Spirit to grow within them.

On Pentecost the Jewish Law called for offerings to be made for the poor and the stranger, bringing joy in this sharing to all classes (Deut 16:10-12). The choice of Pentecost, a day when all the diverse people of God were celebrated, made great sense for the first day of imparting the Spirit to all God's people. Joel's prophecy used by Peter reinforced this idea (Acts 2:17-20). The Spirit would be given to male and female, "your sons and your daughters shall prophecy," to all ages, "your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and to all God's people, "even upon my slaves, both men and women in those days I will pour out my Spirit." Luke makes a point of telling us that many strangers of different languages were also gathered in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11) and were present at the imparting of the Spirit. Significantly Jesus in his ministry had also recognized all people – outcasts, tax collectors, and the Samaritan, essentially the good and the bad as well as the Jew and the Gentile. There was no one unto whom Jesus in his lifetime and the spirit on Pentecost was not sent.

Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36) gave an explanation of what all gathered were witnessing, the outpouring of power from on high. Luke and the early church believed that the prophecies of the Old Testament Prophets, here characterized by Joel, had been realized in Jesus' exaltation.<sup>211</sup> Peter's sermon invoked the words of the prophet Joel (2:28-32) to explain that the gift of the Spirit had been foreordained. As

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<sup>211</sup> Joseph Fitzmeyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998) 248-249. Fitzmeyer believed that "the sermon is scarcely a verbatim report, since the composition of the speech is Lucan; Lucan style and formulation run throughout it." The composition of the sermon by Luke is a commonly held scholarly position. Peter's sermon contains pre-Lucan material. Luke inherited information that he has worked in the sermon of Peter.

what had been prophesied was coming true on this Pentecost, a new day had begun leading to the eschaton.

Luke's writings provided a consistent understanding of the Holy Spirit as God's means of giving prophecy to humans (Luke 1:15-16; 1:41-42; 1:67; 2:25-32; 10:21; Acts 48-12; 7:55-56). This was exemplified by Zechariah, at John's birth: "Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy" (Luke 1:67). Luke wrote that the Holy Spirit given on Pentecost was a Spirit of Prophecy that brought visions and prophetic dreams. The Spirit was poured forth by Christ upon his exaltation to the right hand of God:

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. (Luke 2:33)

The hand of God was the means of imparting prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. "God's hand fell" upon the prophet served as prominent wording for the experience of having visions and hearing the word of God (Isa 8:11; Ezek 1:3; 3:14; 8:1, 3; 11:5; Jer 1:9). The power came upon the prophet as a hand might touch a person and leave as a hand could be withdrawn. The coming and going of God's power meant the power was external to the Prophets. God alone had the ability to cause the Prophet's vision or auditory experience. Without God's hand upon the prophets, they were incapable of having visions. Ezekiel described the removal of the divine hand as leaving him stunned, but back in his normal consciousness (Ezek 3:15). In many passages of Ezekiel the hand and the spirit were used almost synonymous. Yet, the spirit alone was described as the vehicle by which the prophet was moved from one location to another (Ezek 3:14;

11:1, 11:24).<sup>212</sup> Christ's presence at the right hand of God gave him the power of the hand, which was the ability to touch others with visions, dreams, and auditory gifts of prophecy. Luke would distinguish between the hand of Christ that poured forth the Holy Spirit to bring visions and prophecy (Acts 2:4,18;11:28), and the ability to communicate well about Christ and God (Acts 1:8; 4:8, 31) and the hand of the Lord (Christ) that worked as his eminence to turn nonbelievers toward Christ, working also against evil (Acts 11:21;13:11)

Luke claimed David as a prophet (2 Sam 23:2). By using Psalm 16 and 110 as prophetic words of David, Luke provided an intricate proof that David had prophetic foreknowledge of the rise to the divine right hand of one of David's descendants (Acts 2:24-32), but Luke's proof probably also depended upon a prophecy of Nathan. The descendent of David described in Luke's writing was Jesus. Luke and other Christians probably misappropriated a word used in the Septuagint. The word that was used in the Septuagint to mean enthronement (2 Sam 7:12) is the same word that is used in Luke and elsewhere to mean resurrection (ἀνάστασις) – the lifting up. Nathan in a prophecy of the enthronement of the king's ancestor told David: "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up (ἀνάωτήσω) your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam 7:12). In Acts 2:30-31, Luke said David "knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection

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<sup>212</sup> Ezekiel's movement by the Spirit was similar to Philip's movement by the Spirit in Acts 8:37.

of the Messiah.” The theology of enthronement became intricately involved with resurrection for the same word in Greek described both actions.<sup>213</sup>

Luke stressed the change that has occurred in the Exaltation. By raising Jesus to God’s right hand, God made him “Lord and Messiah” (Acts 2:36). “Sit at my right hand” being consistent with enthronement,<sup>214</sup> which made him the heavenly Messiah. But how much power was Jesus given in Luke’s Christology? God was the agent through which the resurrection and exaltation came into being. Jesus was made Lord and Messiah by God’s action. Luke will even point to further passivity of Christ by using the last part b of Psalm 110:1: “until I make your enemies your footstool.”<sup>215</sup> Hay believed that Luke gave Christ only restricted rule with God the controlling power until the Parousia.<sup>215</sup> Yet, Christ has been given too many powers which once belonging only to God to have only limited rule. The entire discourse in Acts 10:34-43 made Jesus a cosmic Lord by saying “He is Lord of all” (36), and to grant forgiveness of sins (38). Jesus assumed divinity from the moment he poured forth the Spirit because God was the only one with this function in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>216</sup> Divinity differs from rule, unless you understand Christ’s sharing God’s divinity gave him a share of all God’s power and ability.

If the exalted Christ was divine, did he have an ontological change, and did he share in the same nature as God? Acts 2:31 described the risen Lord as “not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.” Only in Luke can a bodily ascension

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<sup>213</sup> Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 166-167.

<sup>214</sup> Repeating what was said above in relationship to Psalm 110:1. Psalm 110 can be thought of as the enthronement Psalm of a Davidic king with little to do with the resurrection of Jesus. These very different concepts in English were linked by language in Greek and also in Hebrew. Jesus was an ancestor of David, who would be both lifted up (resurrected) and lifted up (enthroned). The only Hebrew Bible Psalm to use the words of Prophecy was Psalm 110:1. This Psalm became a prophecy of the enthronement of the resurrected Jesus at the right hand of God.

<sup>215</sup> David H. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 71.

<sup>216</sup> Chrispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 22.

be found along with Christ's return in the same form (Acts 1:9-11). Though this presents a strong argument for a fleshly Christ in heaven, some kind of change to the physical structure of Jesus had to be made to keep the flesh from decomposing. A bodily Christ could be placed at God's side, but the flesh has been altered. There is no way to know if Luke was referring to the rise of Jesus in bodily form as was known in the eschatological Jewish literature such as Enoch or in Greek hero mythology.

The pouring out of the Spirit became associated with the exalted Christ not only in Acts, but most notably in John. John does not tie this with Psalm 110:1 for John's image of God would make the divinity incapable of sitting. God was invisible (John 1:18; 1 John 4:11) and consisted of light (1 John 1:5). To think of this God seated made no sense to the Gospel writer. Yet, the Spirit would not be given until Jesus' glorification: "Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39 cf. 16:14; 20:22).

"Poured out" denoted a quantity of the Spirit, not a sprinkle or a drizzle, but a continuous stream which caused what those assembled to both "see and hear" (Acts 2: 33). The pouring of the Spirit brought the Spirit and its gifts to a greater number of individuals. In the Old Testament the Spirit came only to the gifted and limited few. As Christ poured forth the Spirit in Acts it came to all believers and it remained with them. Though Luke has written that Jesus was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) and endowed with the Spirit at his baptism (3:22), there is a change in Jesus' ability to dispense the Spirit after his exaltation. Jesus always possessed the Spirit in its fullness, but instead of giving forth the Spirit individual by individual in the time and

place of his physical location, the exalted Christ was able to send it to entire communities in multiple locations with limitless chronology.

Pouring out suggests a substance in liquid form.<sup>217</sup> Though Luke draws the idea of pouring forth the Spirit from Joel, Luke may have perceived this idea with Hellenistic eyes. He likely understood the Spirit as substance.<sup>218</sup> The Spirit is poured forth as a substance, which fills a person. The Spirit remains with a person. In Luke, the Spirit was pictured not like a hand that came upon the Hebrew prophet and was withdrawn. More importantly Luke understood Spirit as power, which also had substance in Hellenistic thought.<sup>219</sup> The Holy Spirit is equated directly with power as found in Luke 24:49: “I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high,” and its compliment in Acts 1:8: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Jesus was bathed in the power of the Holy Spirit after his baptism (Luke 4:14). Luke basically perceived the Holy Spirit as the power to prophesy, which could correspond both to the Old Testament and Greek thought.<sup>220</sup> Also, the Holy Spirit provided the power to preach the word of God (Luke 12:11; Acts 6:10) and the Holy Spirit gave specific directions for actions to be undertaken (Acts 8:29, 10:19; 11:12; 13:2, 4; 16:6; 20:22-23). The miracles of healing

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<sup>217</sup> The pouring forth of the Spirit can be found in other Old Testament Prophecies for the end time (Isa 32:15,44:3; Zech 12:10), other than Joel 2:28-29.

<sup>218</sup> Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, III:13.15. Stoics thought of Spirit (*πνεύμα*) as a substance that united fire (*πυρ*) and air (*αέρ*). When the Spirit came with the visible effect of fire over the heads of the disciples (Acts 2:3). Spirit can be understood as power with substance.

<sup>219</sup> Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, 40, 540b, 561b. Nemesius wrote “power is matter”, “power consists of matter,” “partakes of it”, “so matter is power.” The Hellenistic understanding of power was that it has matter or substance.

<sup>220</sup> The Old Testament usage of the Spirit for prophecy can be found in Ezek 3:12; 11:5 and Zech 7:12. Pseudo-Plato sees that Apollo put forth a substance that entered into the prophets body, which inspired the prophecy (Pseudo-Plato, *Amatores* 16(II 458d, 759a).

are never ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Luke. Luke associated the power to heal with the power of prayer, the name of Jesus, faith in Jesus, with Jesus Himself.

Peter's sermon provided two ideas to convince those that gathered in Jerusalem that Jesus had become both "Lord" and "Messiah." First, Jesus had overcome death and been resurrected (Acts 2:31) and secondly, Jesus had taken the seat of power next to God (vv. 33-5). The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus was not enough for Luke, if there was no consequence for humanity by this action. Since πνεύμα had substance, Jesus' seat allowed him to be the bearer of the heavenly substance. The hope for humanity lay in the ability of Jesus now as the "Lord" and "Messiah" to bring the heavenly substance πνεύμα into the world. The cross can not be found as important in Luke's ideas. The overcoming of death and the exaltation to a place of divine power has significant importance for Luke, because believing humanity could now receive power from on high.

This power found in Acts 2 was limited to the coming of the Holy Spirit. There exists in Luke none of the ideas of Christ's unlimited power to be found in other scripture. The end of Luke's gospel promised power from on high when the disciples were gathered in Jerusalem. At the end of the Matthew the disciples were sent forth with work to be accomplished, but power was available to help with their tasks. Christ gave these tasks - to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey Christ's commandments. They were to do this for "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20). Matthew gave the disciples the promise that he, who had all power and authority, would be with them in their labors. The second ending of Mark, known to be

an addition to the original gospel<sup>221</sup>, gave the commission to the disciples. The theological ideas of Pseudo-Mark have been poorly developed and were likely drawn from other Christian sources. After Christ's spoke about the commissioning of the disciples, Jesus Christ sat at the right hand of God with no power or purpose disclosed (Mark 16:15-18). Pseudo-Mark likely took this statement from other Christian traditions, a creed or liturgy. The disciples must proclaim the good news to all creation (v.15). The power to accomplish this task (v. 17) was given through the use of Christ's name (an idea found in Luke's gospel). Signs (Johannine idea) of belief were designated as the power to cast out demon, heal, handle venomous snakes, and drink poison with no ill effects (vv. 17-18).

### **The Right as the Good or Moral Side**

When angels appeared to humans, they appear on the right side, when a side was recorded. The angel that was seen by Zechariah was seen at the right side of the altar (Luke 1:11). Though Mark does not identify the young man found in the tomb as an angel, he was wearing a white robe. Angels have been referred to as wearing white (Matt 28:3). The women coming to the tomb found the young man in the tomb at the right side (Mark 16:5-7). The message of this young man was a message for great rejoicing and great good: "He has been raised."

Paul wanted his followers to realize that he had been accepted by the brother and first disciples of Jesus. In Galatians 2:9, Paul wrote that he and Barnabas were offered the right hand of fellowship by James, Cephas, and John. Shacking right hands was a

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<sup>221</sup> C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986), 673-674. Before the middle of the fourth century, there are only two possible mentions of the second ending to Mark in all Christian literature by Justin Martyr (*Apology* 1.45) and Irenaeus. The vocabulary of Mark 16:9-20 differs from the rest of the gospel.

way of greeting others and honoring them (2 Kgs 10:5). To be placed at the right hand was a place of honor in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 2:19; Pss 45:9; 80:17).

The right hand is incorporated into the texts of Matthew and Luke as a significant detail, which represented what is good and righteous. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said:

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.  
Matt 5:29-30

The phrase "cut it off" which was used in v. 30, was also employed in the Old Testament to speak of God cutting off nations, and a royal house of Israel because of their sin. In 1Kgs13:34, house of Jeroboam would no longer be allowed to rule (cut off and destroyed) because Jeroboam allowed the worship of other gods than Yahweh at the high places. In Jeremiah 48:1, God cut off the nation of Moab for their worship of Chemosh. In Jeremiah 51:62, God avenged Israel by cutting off the Babylonians who worshiped idols. Probably the most important sin to the prophets was the worship of idols that represented other gods than Yahweh. Jesus described a need to cut off any sins of immorality.

In Matt 5:27-30, Jesus spoke to men about illicit intercourse. Jesus took that prohibited behavior back to its beginning in the first lustful look of the eye and the first physical action of the hand. People were to stop themselves (cut it off) at the look and the touch, which the eye and the hand represented, before the entire body could be "cut off" for the far greater sin of intercourse. The right side, being the moral side, should represent honorable looks and touches, but when the physical action of the right eye and hand had become lustfully immoral they should be stopped, cut off. The text required

that when the moral side of an individual has become immoral, tear the immorality out, cut off the behavior, before the entire body is infected by the immorality and its life destroyed and sent to hell.<sup>222</sup>

The story of Christ's healing of a man's withered hand in Luke 6:6-11 can be found in Mark 3:1-6 and Matthew 12:9-14. Only Luke makes the addition of the "right" to the man's diseased hand.<sup>223</sup> Luke in emphasizing the detail of the deformed or paralyzed "right" hand probably meant the man could not work, because the strength of that hand was gone. The word ξηρός means dry and is used to denote dry land in its other occurrences in the gospels,<sup>224</sup> except in John 5:3 where ξηρός is used in a list of the diseased. This word in John has most often been translated paralyzed. If ξηρός in Luke 6:6 was taken to mean dried, we might be able to see the right hand as a symbol of the man's morality that was dried up. Prior to this text in Luke 5:17-26, Jesus has healed a paralyzed man, a dried up man, by saying "Your sins are forgiven." If the man's morality was gone, dried up, Jesus could cure the man by forgiving his sins. The central idea of the passage in Luke 6 is the morality of the law. Jesus presented a moral question: "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" The obvious answer is that one must preserve life regardless of the time frame. The Pharisees did not see the correct question to be asked as a moral question, but as a legal

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<sup>222</sup> Matthew would describe the "right hand" as the hand to which the nations of goodness, blessedness, and morality would be sent when Jesus divided the sheep from the goats in Matt 25:33-34. The "right hand" as the moral hand in Matt 5:27-30 would be consistent with Matthew's previously mentioned text.

<sup>223</sup> François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, trans. Christine Thomas, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002) 201. Bovon sees the inclusion of "right" to the withered hand as a novelistic addition. He cites in Jerome's commentary on Matthew 12:13 that Jerome cited an addition to the orthodox Matthew in the "Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use... and which is called by the most people the authentic (Gospel) of Matthew": "I [the man with the withered hand] was a mason and earned (my) living with (my) hands; I beseech thee, Jesus, to restore to me my health that I may not with ignominy have to beg for my bread." (trans. P. Vielhauer and G. Strecker, in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, 1.160; Latin text in Aland, *Synopsis*, 158).

<sup>224</sup> Matt 12:9; Luke 23:31; Heb 11:29.

question: Is it lawful to perform work on the sabbath, according to the Laws of Moses? Jesus by his insistence on curing a man on the sabbath lived the morality he was trying to teach.

Matthew 25:31-46: Matthew depicted a scene of the Son of Man coming in his glory with angels to sit on his throne, where the Son of Man divided the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The passage leads us to believe that the Son of Man separated either individuals in nations or entire nations. The Old Testament gives precedent for the judgment of entire nations. God judged the negative behavior of the entire nation of Israel resulting in the nation's exile. The virtuous go to the right and the reprehensible to the left. The right represents the side of righteous behavior, which the Son of Man described as feeding the poor, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and visiting the sick and imprisoned. Good people, moral people care for those who lack life's necessities. The left side was designated for those who overlooked and ignored the naked, hungry, sick, strange, and imprisoned. How much more the left side must have been for those who do more than just ignore, who openly deceived and defrauded others.

This passage uses Son of Man in verse 31, but switches to King in verse 34 and 40. Both titles can be found in Daniel 7:13-14, but Daniel does not present a scene of the Son of Man sitting on a throne or in judgment. Matthew used the Son of Man seated on a throne in Matt 19:28, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In this passage, the judging is done not by the Son of Man, but by the followers. The judging is not of individuals but again of groups, here, the tribes. Luke 22:28-30 has Jesus given a kingdom by God, but not seated

on a throne. Matthew must have taken these passages with Christ upon a throne from Enoch 61:5, where the Elect One sits on the throne in judgment. The sheep, those who are righteous, go to the right into “eternal life” and the goats, those who are accursed, are sent to the left into “eternal punishment.”

### The Nature of God in the New Testament

**The Synoptic Gospels:** God’s portrait in the Synoptic Gospels must be stitched together from infrequent references. The Transfiguration scene of the Synoptics portrayed God speaking from within a moving cloud (Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). This description of a cloud covering God from human view or God on the clouds derived from the Hebrew Bible. The early Psalms depicted God as the cloud rider (Pss 68:4, 104:3), which was a portrait of Yahweh assimilated from the Canaanite mythology of the god Baal. Other pieces of Hebrew Bible scripture understood God to be swathed in cloud (Pss 18:11; 104:3; Nahum 1:3). Along with these other references, Yahweh appeared during the Exodus encased in a pillar of cloud as God led the Hebrews out of Egypt (Exod 13:21-22; 33:9-10; Num 12:5; 14:14; Deut 31:15). God’s presence in the Transfiguration of the Synoptic Gospels was almost completely replicated from the coming of God in Exodus 24: 16.<sup>225</sup> In this text, God descended upon Mount Sinai within a cloud and addressed Moses from the cloud.

God who functioned audibly and not visually to humans was determined by the controls that the Deuteronomist placed on the written accounts of God. The writers were trying to stay within the Decalogue’s second commandment that humans would not

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<sup>225</sup> Though God was often depicted as descending on the Mountain from heaven, God was also believed to dwell on mountain Zion and at an earlier time on Mount Sinai in other scripture [Zion (Pss 9:11; 48:1; 74:2; 76:2; 132:13; Isa 8:18; 33:5; 60: 14); Sinai (Deut 33:1, 16; Judg 5:5; Ps 68:8, 170].

describe or depict God with a visible form. The Deuteronomist wrote that “Yahweh spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice” (Deut 4:12). This contradicted earlier Hebrew Bible scripture in which Yahweh was seen: “Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel” (Exod 24:9, cf. Num 12:8; 14:14; Exod 33:11; Deut 5:4). Mark drew his account from the restrained representation of God forged by the Deuteronomist (Mark 9:7) and the other Synoptic Gospels follow Mark’s depiction. There is not enough information in the Synoptics to know if a form of God existed in the clouds. In the Transfiguration portrait, the voice from the cloud was identified with God only by the familiar presentation of God and by his words “This is my Son.”<sup>226</sup> Not until 2 Peter 1:16 was the voice from the cloud named as that of “God the Father.”

The Hebrew Bible used the hand of God to symbolize God’s immanent power. Mark and Matthew followed this imagery but felt the representation of divine power must be explained to Christian readers. In their record of Jesus’ trial speech, their explanation actually caused a redundancy. Mark and Matthew quoting loosely from Psalm 110:1 wrote that Jesus responded to the High Priest by saying the Son of Man would come on the clouds sitting at the right hand of “the Power” (Mark 14:52; Matt 26:64). Replacing the right hand with its symbolic meaning, the Gospels writers had written that the Son of Man would sit at the power of the Power. Luke does more explanation by adding the Son of Man would sit at the right hand of the power of God (Luke 22:69).

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<sup>226</sup> The phrase which God spoke at the Transfiguration changed slightly in the different Synoptic Gospels. God said “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” in Mark 9:7. Matthew adds the phrase “with him I am well pleased” after the Beloved (Matt 17:5), which was a phrase used at the Baptism. Luke changed “the Beloved” to “my Chosen” making Jesus perhaps the adopted Christ. All three Synoptic Gospels use the phrase “This is my Son.”

All of God's qualities and characteristics have been reduced to power in the speech before the High Priest. The purpose of this reduction spotlighted that Jesus would return sharing in God's power.

Only Luke used God's hand as the symbol of power beyond Jesus' words answering the question of the High Priest after his arrest. Luke spoke of God's hand continuously upon the newborn John the Baptist to proclaim him a prophet unlike any other in Israel's history (Luke 1:66). Other prophets had God's hand upon them only at short intervals, while the divine power remained with John. In a prayer undoubtedly written by Luke in Acts 4:28, 30, the hand of God had led Christ and would heal through the name of Jesus. In Acts 7:50, God created all things by his hand. In Acts 11:21 and 13:11, the hand of the Lord represented the exalted Christ's power. Luke presented the exalted Christ now able to work in the world in the same manner as God had previously. In Acts 2:33, the exalted Christ was given the power to pour forth the Holy Spirit which formerly belonged only to God.

These scriptures told us that God existed transcendently, but God's power reached onto the earth. God's voice could issue into the world from the heavens, but the divine form was either invisible or never shown to humans. God was never depicted as sitting on a throne in any of the writings of Mark and Luke. Luke wrote carefully about God never depicting any form or feature of God other than the symbolic hand. Even in the vision of Stephen, Luke described Jesus standing at the right hand of God, but no posture of sitting or standing was given for God for no description was given for God (Acts 7:55-56). Luke's Gospel evidenced Gabriel's comment that he (Gabriel) stood before God

(Luke 1:19) but a God with a right hand to stand next to and a presence to stand in could be a spiritual presence.

Mark and Luke were careful not to describe an anthropomorphic God. What little we have would make us believe that they did not believe in God with a body. In both Luke's human dieing scenes he portrays the humans as giving up their spirits (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59) and leaving their bodies behind. While others Gospel writers gave Jesus different words on the cross, Luke recorded Jesus as saying "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). God is never said to be Spirit, but this is likely what Luke believed.

In Mark and Luke, Jesus made a statement of God's moral perfection, when he remarked that no one is good but God (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). This remark said a great deal about the monotheism and humility of Jesus.

Matthew: Matthew, unlike the other Synoptic Gospels, used the image of God seated on a throne in heaven: "Whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it" (Matt 23:22 cf. 5:34). Matthew's portrait of an embodied God seated upon his throne was taken from the Hebrew Scriptures (2 Chr 18:18; Pss 9:7; 11:4; 12:2). Matthew believed God to be visible to those pure in heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matt 5:8). Matthew returned again to the Old Testament for evidence. He found there that the prophets often were called to their ministry by seeing God seated on a throne (Ezek 1:26-28; Isa 6:1; 2 Chr 13:18). These uniquely chosen men were likely pure of heart. Matthew's description of God's visibility contradicts John's depiction of God who "no one has ever seen" (John 1:18) and the silence of Mark and Luke on the visibility of God. Matthew's God was visible, and

embodied though Matthew's Gospel does not give enough information to know the ontological nature of God's body. God was enveloped in a cloud when God was in motion (Matt 17:5), but this still makes no determination of whether God's body was considered by Matthew as wispy and ethereal, a spiritual body, or composed of more sturdy materials.

The Johannine literature had a different understanding of God than the Synoptic Gospels. At Jesus' baptism John the Baptist, not God's words from heaven, identified Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:34). God would not speak from the heavens for God resided outside the earth, where God was unknowable. John's Gospel understood God to be Spirit (4:24) and light (1 John 1:5) incapable of verbal speech. God spoke in a spiritual way to John: "I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me" (John 1:33). John's Gospel declared that "no one has seen God" (John 1:18), which presented God as invisible to the human eye. There was no hand of God in John's Gospel, because God's power did not intercede in the world. God's emissary in the world was Jesus, who allowed the love of the Father to reach the earth through the Son. God's form of spirit and light, precluded having a body to sit enthroned or a right hand by which Jesus could sit.<sup>227</sup>

Paul: God's nature was defined as invisible with eternal power in Romans 1:20. Little is said of God's nature beyond this phrase. We do know that according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:17 "the Lord [Christ] is Spirit" and Jesus steps into the spirit by his death and resurrection: "The gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the

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<sup>227</sup> The Gospel of John does use the phrase "the Father's hand." He refers to the Father's power (John 10:29).

spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:3-4a). Jesus was instituted the Son of God in power only by resurrection. Jesus also underwent a transformation into a spiritual being with a spiritual body at his resurrection. Paul wrote about human resurrection of the body: "It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:44). This process of the fleshly body becoming a spiritual body was accompanied with power: "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (15:43). If this was the process for human resurrection, Christ being a human body became a spiritual body in his resurrection. Paul said in Romans 1:20 that Christ's resurrection was accompanied "with power." This is exactly the gift that Paul described that would come to all humans in resurrection. They would be raised in power. Paul also understood that power was always associated with the spirit. The phrase "power of the Holy Spirit" is found in Romans 15:13 and 15. Also "the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18; 2:5; 2 Cor 13:4) was used interchangeably with the power of God's Holy Spirit. Jesus was raised as the Son of God in a spiritual body with power.

Paul believed that all that is heavenly is composed of Spirit. Paul understood that there are two spheres.<sup>228</sup> One sphere is the material world, which is controlled by the power of sin (Rom 7:14), and the other is the sphere of divine glory controlled by God's power (spirit). God was invisible because God was spirit. God had eternal power, as all power belongs to God, but also because that which is spirit has power. Paul could interchange "the spirit of God" with "the spirit of Christ" within the same verse (Rom 8:9) because both God and the exalted Christ were spirit. The same power was active within the two.

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<sup>228</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 6:416.

The body of Christ was the church in Paul's epistles (Rom 7:4; 1 Cor 10:16).

When humans became part of the church, they also were inaugurated into the Spirit of the risen Christ by their baptism (1 Cor 12:12-13). Christians were assured of a spiritual life and the gifts that followed by baptism: "Anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Cor 6:17). The union of the believer in the body of Christ would make the Christian spiritually present at the right hand of the God through the spiritual union with Christ. The completion of the Christians' presence at the right hand of God would not be possible until the resurrection. At that time the human is given a spiritual body.

## Chapter 4

### Christian Creeds

#### Table of Creeds that include “Seated at the Right Hand”

##### Basic Outline of Creedal Clause:

And He went up to into the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the Father

##### “Seated at the Right Hand” present in these Creedal Formulas:

###### Biblical Creedal Statements:

Romans 8:34

I Peter 3:18-22

###### Ante-Nicene Creeds and Confessional Statements

*Epistle to the Philippians* 2:1-3, Poly carp c. 150

*De praescriptione haereticorum* 13:1-6, Tertullian c. 203-210

*Adversus Praxeum* 2:1, Tertullian

*De Virginibus verlandis* 1:3, Tertullian

*Confession of the Presbyters of Smyrna*, c. 180-200<sup>229</sup>

*The Apostolic Tradition* 21:12-18, usually attributed to Hippolytus c. 215; not a creed but a tripartite interrogation on the faith asked of the one being baptized<sup>230</sup>

*A Declaration of Faith*, Gregory Thaumaturgus (c. 213-c. 270) recorded by Gregory of Nyssa, taken from the recollection of his grandmother<sup>231</sup>

*The Roman Symbol* (late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century)<sup>232</sup>

Daughter Creeds of the Roman Creed (written down during the four to sixth century, but established much earlier)<sup>233</sup>:

*Milan*

*Aquileia*

*Ravena*

*Turin*

*Remesiana*

*Hippo*

*Carthage*

*Ruspe*

*Priscillian*

*Spain* (6<sup>th</sup> Century)

<sup>229</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:58.

<sup>230</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:60.

<sup>231</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:70.

<sup>232</sup> J. N. D. Kelley, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 101.

<sup>233</sup> J. N. D. Kelley, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 172-181.

## Gaul: *Riez, Arles, and Toulon*

Nicene Creed (325) – omitted the right hand

### Post-Nicene Creeds

*The Baptismal Creed of Jerusalem (350)* – The creed was found in the *Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem*.<sup>234</sup>

*The Creed of the Fourth Synod of Sirmium (359)* – The Synod was called by Constantius to solve the differences between the Arian and Nicene parties, But the resulting creed was too vague to gain general acceptance.<sup>235</sup>

*The Creed of Constantinople (360)* - The creed which served as a standard of faith until 381, when the First Council of Constantinople reestablished the Nicene doctrine of the trinity.<sup>236</sup>

*The Nicaeno-Constantinople Creed (381)* – Additions to the Nicene Creed would define the Holy Spirit, which were said in the creed to have proceeded from the Father. Also additions about the Son included the role of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit in the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the Son's seat at the right hand of the Father in the ascension.<sup>237</sup>

*Apostolic Constitutions* (end of 4<sup>th</sup> Century) – *The Apostolic Constitutions* was written in Syria or Palestine as a detailed baptismal creed.<sup>238</sup>

*The Creed of the First Synod of Toledo (400)*<sup>239</sup>

*The Athanasian Creed: Quicunque vult* (before 450) – *The Athanasian Creed* is believed to have arisen in France; the work first appeared in a sermon of Caesarius of Arles (542), but parallels phrases appeared in the work of Vincent of Lérins before 450.<sup>240</sup>

*The Rule of Faith of the Eleventh Synod of Toledo (675)* – *The Rule of Faith* described in detail the trinitarian and the Christological doctrines. This document was considered one of the most correct and precise of medieval orthodoxy to which other synods looked for the formulation of their own understandings.<sup>241</sup>

*The Apostles' Creed* (early 8<sup>th</sup> Cent.) – *The Apostles' Creed* first appeared in a

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<sup>234</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:94-95.

<sup>235</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:96-98.

<sup>236</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:96-97, 99.

<sup>237</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:160-163.

<sup>238</sup> J. N. D. Kelley, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 186.

<sup>239</sup> J. N. D. Kelley, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 361.

<sup>240</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:673-677.

<sup>241</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:715-721.

handbook for pastors by Pirminius of Reichenau (c.753). The creed appears to be an extended version of *The Roman Symbol* with New Testament texts underlying the creed.<sup>242</sup>

### Christian Creeds

To the western church, *The Apostle's Creed* has been considered “the creed of creeds.”<sup>243</sup> The creed’s summary of the faith was lauded for its conciseness and simplicity by Luther, Calvin, and other reformers. *The Apostle's Creed* has retained its position as the most widely used baptismal creed in western churches. The text was a slightly enlarged version of *The Roman Symbol* used since the second century, although the first known appearance of *The Apostle's Creed* was in a handbook for pastors by Pirminius of Reichenau (753).<sup>244</sup>

The central and most significant part of *The Apostle's Creed* is the focus upon the descent and ascent of Jesus Christ:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended into hell.

↑ On the third day he rose from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty

qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto  
natus ex Maria Virgine,  
passus sub Pontio Pilato,  
crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus  
descendit ad inferna,

<sup>242</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:667-669.

<sup>243</sup> Schaff, Philip, *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & brothers, 1919), 1:14.

<sup>244</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:667.

tertia die resurrexit a mortuis  
ascendit ad coelos,  
sedet ad dexteram die Patris Omnipotens

This creed, that took its final form at a late date (785), showed none of the pre-existent understanding of Christ for which the author's of the Nicene Creed fought four centuries earlier. This portrayed the dependence of *The Apostle's Creed* on The *Roman Creed* that took its shape in the early third century before pre-existence was an intense theological issue in the fight against Arianism. The creed's presentation of the life of Jesus after his conception was the downward movement of his suffering, death, and burial into his descent into Hell. Although Christ's descent into the Inferno was a later and controversial addition, the movement into Hell had a Biblical basis (Eph 4:8-10; 1 Pet 3:19; 4:6) and made a significant contrast to the upward movement of Christ's ascent into heaven.<sup>245</sup> The Creed made a fitting background for baptism. For some understood that the individual's descent into the water was dying with Christ and the individual's ascent out of the water was a rising with Christ (Rom 6:8-11; Col 3:1; Phil 3:10-11). Every time *The Apostle's Creed* would be recited, an individual would symbolically move from death to life as a memory of his/her baptism

The climax of the Christological section lies is the phrase "sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty (*omnipotentum*)."<sup>246</sup> The high point of the Creed was Christ's session, which exalted him and glorified him. The relevance of this climatic statement lies in the present tense of the verb "sits" for the individual reciting the creed. Jesus Christ *now* sits at the right hand of God *omnipotentum*, where Jesus has the power to help in any earthly human crisis. The next phrase "Thence he shall come to judge the living

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<sup>245</sup> Hengel, Martin, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 120-121.

and the dead” is dependent upon Christ’s exaltation at the right hand of God. By the individual’s other knowledge of scripture, the user of the creed has been reminded that in the judgment, Christ has been raised to the position in which he is able to intercede for him/her (Rom 8:34). The session also described Christ’s enthronement and exaltation, which for many portrayed his divinity.

### **Early Formulas in the New Testament**

At the beginning of Christianity, the first Christian communities believed that Jesus had ascended to sit at the right hand of God. Before the texts that became the New Testament were written, the exaltation of Christ became part of the early oral declarations of faith. By comparing the wording of Romans 8:34, 1 Peter 3:22 and Colossians 3:1 their similarities can be noted:

Rom 8:34 – hos estin en dexia tou theou  
1 Pet 3:22 – hos estin en dexia (tou) theou  
Col 3:1 - ho Christos estin en dexiea tou theou kathemenos

These passages must have been taken from an early Christian confession or hymn that was recited or sung for these three passages have no words in common with the Old Greek of Psalm 110:1. The Septuagint employed “ek dexion,” while the three texts above and passages in the book of Hebrews changed “ek dexion” for “en dexia.” There is a possibility that First Peter was dependent on Paul’s writings for the author wrote much later than Paul. The Book of Hebrews made a direct quote from the Septuagint using the preposition “ek” in Hebrews 1:13, but switched to “en” all other texts using Psalm 110:1 as their base document (Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> There is the possibility that the authors of 1 Peter and Colossians have taken their passages from Paul’s writing. These letters used “en” which was quite different from the Synoptic Gospels which all used “ek”

Words that the New Testament authors used to describe the formulas that had been passed to them were “holding fast to the word of life” (Phil 2:16), “the pattern of doctrine” (Rom 6:17), “the word that was preached to you” (1 Pet 1:25), and other like phrases.<sup>247</sup> Paul spoke directly of his acquisition of earlier instruction in 1Cor 15:3: “I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received.”

The short names of Christ in the New Testament, such as “Messiah” and “Son of God,” developed early.<sup>248</sup> The early confessions of faith were short and grew in length as baptismal confession became formalized. The principle acknowledgment of belief for Paul was the short phrase “Jesus is Lord” (Rom 10:9). Even this mini-declaration was packed with large ideas, for it recognized that the user of the phrase believed that Jesus was his sovereign, raised through resurrection to divine power. Dunn wrote that “*Kyrios* was the title given to Jesus at his resurrection/exaltation and by virtue of it.”<sup>249</sup> In the Gospels of John and Luke, Jesus was not called Lord by his disciples until after his resurrection and exaltation (John 20:28 and Luke 24:34). In the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible used by the churches of Paul, the divine name was replaced by Lord. When Jesus received the name Lord, he received the name above all names, God’s name. To use the phrase “Jesus is Lord” declared Jesus divine. The divinity of Jesus depended on his enthronement at the right hand of God.

Dunn felt that the earliest Christianities described Jesus as becoming the Son of God, raised to kingly power at the resurrection and exaltation. Paul centered his writing

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as in the Old Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible. Matthew and Luke used the written form of Mark’s Gospel for their work. Paul and the other authors may have known their passages first as oral confessions or hymns, without referring to the written text of the Hebrew Bible. John’s Gospel never used Psalm 110:1.

<sup>247</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longman, 1972), 8-10.

<sup>248</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: Trinity Press, 1990), 35-54.

<sup>249</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: Trinity Press, 1990), 51.

on the resurrection and exaltation (Rom 1:4; 8:34; 1 Cor 15:21; 42-47; Phil 2:9) while the Gospel's main focus was the resurrection (Matt 25:31; 28:2; 18; Mark 16:6; 19; Luke 24:5; 46; John 11:25; 20:17). The Sonship of Jesus was included in the Gospel accounts of Christ's pre-existence, birth, baptism, and exaltation. The movement toward a higher and higher Christology pushed the beginning of Christ as the Son of God from his exaltation, to his baptism, to his birth, and to his pre-existence. Hebrew 1:3-5 linked Psalm 2:7 to Christ's session at the right hand of God: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you," and again, Hebrews 5:5 used Psalm 2:7 to show that Christ had been appointed High Priest by the One who had begotten him as Son of God. A more astonishing statement is made of the Son in Hebrews 1:8, where Psalm 45:7-8 is quoted in which the Son is said to be God: "But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.'" As the exalted Christ was seated upon the throne as Son he became God.<sup>250</sup> Sonship and kingship have been identified together in Hebrews. In Acts 13:33, Luke also used Psalm 2:7 to speak of Jesus as having been made Son of God after the resurrection. Essentially there must have been an early association of Psalm 2:7 with the resurrection and exaltation that was retained, even after Jesus was declared consecutively Son of God at his birth, baptism, transfiguration, and exaltation by Luke in his Gospel.

In Romans 1:3-4 the distinction was made between Jesus as David's descendent "according to the flesh" and Son of God in power "according to the spirit ... by the resurrection from the dead." Paul the earliest New Testament author believed that Jesus

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<sup>250</sup> Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 205-206. The use of Psalm 45 in Hebrew 1:8 could also be taken to mean that only the throne of God is meant, so the Son sat on God's throne and was given God's scepter, which functions much the same way. For if the Son assumed all the powers of God with these gifts, the Son essentially functions as God, even if a separation has been kept between the two entities.

was made the Son of God in power by the resurrection and exaltation (Phil 2:9-11). For Paul's thought, Son of God in power would be identical with Lord. Paul would have been able to have used the confession of 1 John "Jesus is the Son of God," but would have held a different Christology. For Paul the Sonship of God was either not fully completed until Christ's resurrection and exaltation or Christ did not receive Sonship until his resurrection and exaltation. In John's Christology, Jesus was always the spiritual Son of God, the Son of God who took on flesh. The flesh did not affect his spiritual nature. After his earthly work was finished, Jesus returned to heaven. To recognize Jesus as the Son of God was to perceive by faith that it was not Christ's earthly appearance that was crucial but his heavenly nature and origin. The Christian of the Johannine community confessed "Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 4:15; 5:5).

Fragments of spoken liturgies, hymns, repeated preaching statements, and possibly the earliest statements of beliefs recited at baptism became part of the New Testament texts. The exaltation at God's right hand formed one of the most common elements of these early beliefs statements. One the testimonies can be found in Romans 8:34:

Christ Jesus Who died, or rather has been raised from the dead,  
Who is *on the right hand of God*,  
Who also makes intercession for us,

First Peter 3: 18-22 also appears to be written from an oral confession or set of teachings. As these statements of faith developed, they grew longer. As the parousia was recognized as further and further in the future, Christ's intercession for believers became more important than the last judgment and coming of the Lord. The exaltation gave Christ the power to give the church the strength and power to withstand persecution,

grace for the removal of sins, and joy in the midst of trouble. The author of 1 Peter has slightly reformulated Paul's statement in Romans that Jesus was descended from David in the flesh, but raised Son of God in power according to the Spirit:

For Christ also suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,  
put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit,  
in which he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison... through  
the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
Who has gone into heaven,  
And is *at the right hand of God*,  
Angels, authorities and powers made subject to Him.

A further development of the exaltation in what has evolved into something like a creed can be found in 1 Timothy 3:16. This scripture still contained the exaltation, but the conventional formula of Jesus' exultation at God's right hand was not used; in its place was "taken up in glory." What is given little mention is his death and resurrection, because focus has now been shifted to his glorification. The creed's subject is Christ's exaltation. Each two line phrase in 1 Timothy 3:16 contained a first line about Jesus' incarnation and the second line about his exaltation.<sup>251</sup> This is a clear division between the earthly world and the heavenly, a division between matter and spirit. The scripture observed the progress of Jesus, saying that he achieved the pinnacle by being justified in spirit at the resurrection:

"He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory."

This scripture from 1 Timothy contains the same contrast between flesh and spirit that was found in Romans 1:3-4: "Descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead." Jesus' true nature was revealed in the body, and this revelation was

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<sup>251</sup> Edward Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship* (London, SCM Press, 1960), 64-65.

vindicated in the spirit by being taken into glory. This can be seen as describing the transition from an earthly body to a spiritual body in the resurrection.

The author of Hebrews was trying to get the people of his Christian community to hold onto their beliefs in a time of Christian persecution. He repeatedly drew his readers' attention to "the confession" that they must grasp firmly: "We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession" (Heb 4:14; cf. Heb 3:1; 10:23). Hebrews described the confession as dealing with Jesus as High Priest, who had the power to help them from God's throne. Hebrews' central idea of Jesus' heavenly priesthood and sacrificial act must have been a previously developed confession (Heb 6:1-2). This idea understood Jesus as the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, who sat on God's throne at the divine right hand (Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). On the mercy seat of the divine throne the exalted Christ had presented his death blood as a sacrificial offering for the forgiveness of the sins of humans and now sat to intercede for the faithful (Heb 7:25). This confession was fundamentally concerned with the function of the exalted Christ.

### The Earliest Creeds

Before the early fourth century, all creeds were particular to the local area in which they were used.<sup>252</sup> The local creeds showed similarities. Inconsistencies in the creeds arose because of their oral transmission. The slightest creedal change could reflect a difference in theology. The great conformity in the theology and wording of creeds came through the efforts of rulers not ecclesial officials. Both Emperors Constantine<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 205.

<sup>253</sup> Richard E. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God: The Struggle to Define Christianity during the Last Days of Rome* (New York: Harcourt, 1999) 65, 71-72.

and later, Charlemagne<sup>254</sup> caused uniformity in creedal formulas. The bishops may have desired to bring about a uniform understanding of Christianity, but they differed amongst themselves about the best theology to represent orthodoxy. The bishops lacked the power to force consistency among others of equal rank. Only emperors held the power to compel a single creedal formula to be used throughout the church.

Originally only a one-clause confession of faith was necessary to proclaim one a Christian. These statements stand out in the New Testament, because the texts often declared them as all that one needed to profess one's faith: "Jesus is Lord" (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3), "Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)" (John 20:30; 1 John 2:21; 1 John 5:1), and "Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 4:15; 1 John 5:5). The primacy of the resurrection to an early Christian's belief can be seen in Paul's two fold confession of faith: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9).

The single-clause confessions stand side by side with two-clause and three-clause declarations of faith in the New Testament. Kelly wrote "No doubt the three types existed side by side at the period of the composition of the New Testament writing, but the earliest stage of all the simple statement that "Jesus was Lord" (or something like it) expressed the beliefs of Christians in epitome."<sup>255</sup>

In the New Testament, Christ sat at the right hand of God (Mark 14:58; 16:19; Matt 26:64; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:32; Rom 8:34; Heb 10:12). In much of the West, the first interpreters of these scriptures accepted that Christ had a body in which he was actually seated in the resurrection. Ignatius (37-107) desired that Christianity not be understood

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<sup>254</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 420-425. Also, Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 321.

<sup>255</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 24-25.

as worshiping two gods, so he stressed the unity of Father and Son. Ignatius believed the resurrected Christ, who ate and drank upon his return, had human flesh. Iranaeus (130-200), who fought the Docetism of some Gnostic sects, wrote that the bodily ascension of Christ (*την ἐνσαρκον εις τους ουρβους*) was a certainty – a truth.<sup>256</sup>

The Apologist Justin (100-165) wanted to accept that Jesus ascended bodily to heaven, but his conception of God as immovable and located in one place outside the world did not allow Jesus a place at God's right hand. Justin finally said that anthropomorphic words of scripture as found in Psalm 110:1 allowed only the Son to have a body. Justin quoted Psalm 110, but focused his attention on verse three of the LXX in which Jesus was understood to be pre-existent and on verse four that gave him an eternal priesthood.<sup>257</sup> In the West, confessional formulas with the phrase “sits at the right hand of God” had become established by the beginning of the third century.

The church in the East was not accepting of the phrase without spiritualizing the formula. To anyone educated in philosophy, God with a body was not acceptable. Christians who had studied Plato wrote sparingly of the session at the right hand. Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Origen (185-254), and Didymus the Blind (313-398) spiritualized the statement into a non-spatial sense. Modern thought might conceptualize what these ancient Christians were saying as the movement of the ascended Jesus to a spiritual plane which was unlike the physical plane of earthly existence.

Eastern Christianity left out the phrase of Jesus located at God's right hand, when discussing the Nicene Creed of 325. Even though discussion around this creed had

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<sup>256</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 128-129.

<sup>257</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 127-128.

shifted attention to Christ's pre-existence and incarnation, it was difficult for the Eastern Church Fathers to agree with the phrase "sits at the right hand of God." Probably, they chose to overlook the phrase when informing their congregations of the creed, because of their beliefs drawn from Greek philosophy. The philosophic perspective did not allow God to be described anthropomorphically. God had no right hand for he had no physical body.<sup>258</sup>

Before the declarative creeds were accepted as part of the liturgy, a set of three questions were asked of the baptismal candidate in both the Eastern and Western churches. In the East the baptismal questions gradually disappeared leaving only the triple sprinkling. The questions came originally from the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Tertullian wrote, "For we are baptized, not once but thrice, into the three persons severally in answer to their several names." The *Apostolic Tradition*, written about 215 and attributed to Hippolitus, contains no mention of catechetical instruction or the use of a creed.<sup>259</sup> The text of the *Apostolic Tradition* did give the liturgical questions asked at baptism. The questions represent the text of what would become *The Roman Baptismal Creed* or *Roman Symbol*, but given in interrogatory formula. *The Roman Baptismal Creed* would develop into *The Apostles' Creed* and formed the basis of all Western baptismal creeds.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 124. In Eusebius' letter to his congregation in Caesarea he omits the phrase "sits at the right hand" when explaining the Nicene Creed of 325. Other omissions can be found in Arius, Hilary of Poitiers, and Germinus of Sirmium.

<sup>259</sup> Jaroslave Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003) 1:60.

<sup>260</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 101.

The final redaction of the *Roman Baptismal Creed* in the form of baptismal questions was believed to have been during the Pontificate of Victor (189-197) to combat Docetism.<sup>261</sup> The second baptismal question of Hippolytus reads:

“Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead?”<sup>262</sup>

This question presented an embodied Christ, in which each life experience indicated his physical nature. The Docetists said that Jesus only appeared to be human. They believed that it was ignominious for the Christ to have undergone crucifixion. Tertullian was still fighting the Docetists a quarter century later than the baptismal questions were originally written. He claimed that Christ needed to have possessed a physical body. If Christ’s blood was not shed, there could be no salvation.<sup>263</sup> The Roman Baptismal Creed was written to focus Christian attention on Christ Jesus’ birth, death, ascension, heavenly presence at the right hand of God, and his return for judgment – all of these in his human bodily form.

#### The Creeds Produced by Ecumenical Councils

#### CHART OF THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

<u>Council</u>	<u>Creed Produced</u>	<u>Purpose or Contribution</u>
1. Nicaea I (325)	<i>The Nicene Creed</i> (first universal)	defined Orthodoxy against Arianism
2. Constantinople	<i>The Niceno-Constantinopolitan</i>	Doctrine of the

<sup>261</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), 129-130.

<sup>262</sup> Jaroslave Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 1:61.

<sup>263</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005), 164.

(351)	<i>Creed or Creed of Constantinople</i> which was claimed to have arisen at Constantinople, did not likely arise until 451 <sup>264</sup>	Holy Spirit
3. Ephesus (431)		added Mary's title Theotokos; anti- Nestorius
4. Chalcedon (451)	The standard text of <i>The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed</i>	Doctrine of the person of Christ
5. Constantinople II (553)		anti-Mopsuestia
6. Constantinople III (680-81)		Christ had dual natures (divine and human) in one person
7. Nicaea II (787)	<i>The Definition of Faith of Chalcedon</i>	Christ's two natures were united and the properties of both were preserved

### *The Creed of Nicaea (325)*

The creed was written to counter the theology of Arius, who believed that God was “the only unbegotten, the only eternal, the only one without beginning, the only true, the only one who has immortality the only wise, the only good, the only potentate.” Arius also believed in God’s creation of his Son. The two could not be equals or share the same *ousia*. If they shared the same *ousia* (essence) the transcendence of God would be violated by the Son’s contact with the created and changeable earthly. The bodiless God could never suffer, change, or be affected by anything that would happen to an embodied being. God alone was the creator of all things.<sup>265</sup>

<sup>264</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Publishing, 1972), 296-331.

<sup>265</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:194.

The Son's divinity was established at Nicaea. Only a divine Christ, not a creature, could save humanity. The majority of the bishops at Nicea felt that the created Jesus Christ of Arius' beliefs could not be the salvation of humanity that had fallen so far away from God. According to Nicaean orthodoxy, Christ did not have a beginning, but was the beginning of all creation. The Logos created giving "nothing" a being, but humans kept slipping back into non-being out of which they were called by Christ. Humans by their fall into sin were made mortal and corruptible. Athanasius said that "the Lord who is before the ages and through whom the ages came into existence, so that, since it was in him, we also might be able to inherit that eternal life."<sup>266</sup> Only the one who had given life could restore that life.<sup>267</sup> Christ was *homoousios*, one essence, with the Father.

Christ had incarnated for human salvation, in the words of the creed "For the sake of us men and for the purpose of salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man." Salvation was linked with incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and judgment, but not death and crucifixion: He "suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead." Christ's death was not mentioned in the creed. Salvation held various definitions and was viewed from different perspectives by those who created *The Creed of Nicaea*. Mixed images were used by the authors of Nicaea to express the salvation of humanity. These included Christ as the Good Samaritan taking pity on humanity, the great physician who healed humanity, the

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<sup>266</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Orations Against the Arians*, 2.76 quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:205.

<sup>267</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:203-205.

sacrificial victim, and God the Logos who became man that we might become God.<sup>268</sup>

Though Christ seated at the right hand of God was omitted from this creed, Christ's function at the right hand as judge was included. Didymus presented the idea that salvation came through Christ the merciful Judge, who granted forgiveness to those who believed: "Judge of the living and the dead, that is, of the righteous and of the sinners, the one who grants forgiveness of sins to those who believe in his name, the one who saves us by his own glory and graciousness."<sup>269</sup>

Emphasis was placed on incarnation, resurrection, and judgment in *The Creed of Nicaea*, the importance of salvation by the cross would be developed by later generations. The most emphatic notion of the creed was a divine Christ, assured through *homoousios* with the Father.

#### *The Niceno-Constantinople Creed*

At the Council of Chalcedon (451) a creed was read that was purported to have arisen at the Council of Constantinople (381). Kelly found no evidence that the Constantinopolitan Creed was written at the earlier Council of Constantinople. The actual minutes of the Council in 381 were not preserved, only the four canons which the Council sanctioned still exist. In a letter sent to Theodosius, the four canons do not include a creed. *The Creed of Niceae* was upheld as binding by the canons.<sup>270</sup>

*The Creed of Constantinople* that was introduced at the Council of Chalcedon (451) as the Creed of the First Council of Constantinople was probably developed as a

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<sup>268</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:205-206.

<sup>269</sup> Didymus of Alexandria, *On the Trinity*, quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:206.

<sup>270</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Publishing, 1972), 296-306.

baptismal creed. The radical divergence between *The Nicene Creed* and *The Constantinople Creed* can be understood by the fact that of 178 words in *The Constantinople Creed* only 33 or about one fifth can be said to have arisen from *The Nicene Creed*.<sup>271</sup> The Council of Nicaea had been mute about the divinity of the Holy Spirit and did little to develop the nature of the Spirit. The definition of the Holy Spirit was enlarged at the Council of Chalcedon to prevent the claim that there existed little biblical support for the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The terms of *homooious* and *hypostases* were not used in relation to the Holy Spirit. The creed claimed that “the Spirit, the holy, the lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshiped and co-glorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets.”

The Holy Spirit was seen to be God because the Spirit received the titles of God. “What titles which belong to God are not applied to [the Holy Spirit], except only ‘unbegotten’ and ‘begotten?’” asked Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>272</sup> The divine titles given in the creed were holy and lordly. Also the Spirit was seen as arising “from God.” The Holy Spirit “proceeds from God, not by generation, as does the Son, but as the breath of his mouth.”<sup>273</sup> The Spirit was also understood to be God because he accomplished what only God could do, he gave life. The giving of life made the Holy Spirit a creator not a

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<sup>271</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Publishing, 1972), 304.

<sup>272</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations*, 31.29, quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:215.

<sup>273</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, 18:46 quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:215.

creature. Didymus claimed that the one who filled all creatures had to be “of different substantia than are all the creatures.”<sup>274</sup>

*The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* also added to the Christological understanding of the old creed. *The Creed of Nicaea* used the words “for us humans and for our salvation” he became incarnate, suffered and rose up, went into heaven, is coming to judge. All Christ’s actions were motivated for human salvation. *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* retained the early statement “for us humans and for our salvation” but added “was crucified on our behalf under Pontus Pilate,” which placed a focus on Christ’s crucifixion that was not present in the first creed. Carroll pointed out:

This change means that the Son of God became man not to be one of us, not to take on the human condition – which includes suffering but is not defined by it – and not, for that matter, to undergo the Resurrection, as the affirmation of the Father’s covenantal faithfulness to the Son. Instead, according to the theological shift reflected in the amended creed, the Son of God became man in order to be crucified.<sup>275</sup>

Though the creed retained Christ’s incarnation, and resurrection for our salvation, the crucifixion was to become the conciliatory act between God and humanity. The importance of the cross of salvation would only grow before and during the Middle Ages. The saving act of Christ on the cross became the central act of redemption, to such a degree that the importance of the Resurrection was almost obliterated and the celebration of Easter was only an announcement of the earlier victory of the cross.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Didymus of Alexandria, *On the Holy Spirit*, 8, quoted in <sup>274</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 1:216.

<sup>275</sup> James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 191.

<sup>276</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition; Volume 3, The Growth of the Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, 3 vols., (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1978), 3:131-134.

### Addition of the “filioque”

The problem of the addition of the “filioque” (and son) to *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* eventually divided the Western Christian churches from the Eastern Christian churches. Written in *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* was the phrase “the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver who proceedeth from the Father.” The East contended that creeds constructed by an Ecumenical Council could be changed only by another Ecumenical Council. The Eastern churches believed that all Christian churches were bound to *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*, which was the last form of the Nicene Creed agreed upon by an Ecumenical Council.<sup>277</sup>

The Western churches had a long tradition of believing that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son. At the time of Christ’s session at God’s right hand, Jesus Christ was given the power to send the Holy Spirit. Tertullian wrote in *De praescriptione haereticorum* 13.4-5:

Thereafter, he proclaimed a new law and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven, performed great deeds, was nailed to the cross, rose again on the third day, was taken up to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father, and sent in his place the power of the Holy Spirit who guides believers.

Tertullian also wrote a little different perspective: “I believe the Spirit to proceed from no other source than from the Father through the Son” (*Adversus Pixean* 4.1). Yet this statement is preceded by the claim that the Son “has received all power from the Father.” All power would include the power to send the Holy Spirit.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) cited that Tertullian had set forth the formula that became the western standard “From the Father through the Son.” Augustine understood that the Godhead, essentially the trinity, was the first being. United the trinity existed

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<sup>277</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 415.

before all else. The double procession of the Spirit did not violate his idea of the unity of the trinity for what one member of the trinity could do the others could do also. There existed, between the East and West, a difference in viewing the composition and generation of the trinity. In the East the Father was the source of the other two beings. The Son came from the Father by generation, while the Spirit came by procession from the Father.<sup>278</sup> The Son could not produce the Spirit. The Father alone held this ability as the first cause of the other two.

The first western creed after the First Ecumenical Council of Constantinople to include the double procession was known as *The Creed of Damascus* produced in the Synod of Saragossa (380) as an anti-Priscillianist creed. Also, the First Council of Toledo (400) was said to produce a creed that contained the statement: “the Spirit, the Paraclete, who is neither the Father Himself nor the Son, but proceeds from the Father and the Son,”<sup>279</sup> but scholars now believe that the double procession in the Spanish Synodal Creeds of the fifth and sixth centuries are interpolations.<sup>280</sup>

Emperor Charlemagne convened a synod in 809 to approve the text of a creed which had been prayed in the royal chapel. The synod approved the creed which included “And the Holy Spirit … proceeding, apart from time and without separation, from the Father and the Son.” Pope Leo III would not include the *filioque* as an honored addition to the creed after Charlemagne petitioned him for the change. Pope Leo III took the position of the Eastern churches that nothing could be added to the creed, though he taught the double procession: “We ourselves do not chant this, but we do speak it and by speaking teach it; yet we do not presume by our speaking and teaching to insert anything

<sup>278</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay, 1972), 358-359.

<sup>279</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay, 1972), 360.

<sup>280</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 434.

into the creed.” Speaking meant that the double procession was merely a theological idea, which was subject to conjecture, even change. Chanting would place the double procession into the liturgy of the church and make it part of the “rule of faith.” The liturgy held a permanence and a legitimacy that teaching did not.

Pope Benedict VIII gave permission in 1014 to Emperor Henry II to have *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* chanted at the Eucharist with the addition of the *filioque*. By chanting the creed with the addition of the double procession, it became a permanent part of the Mass. By 1054, writs of excommunication were exchanged by the Eastern and Western churches. The addition of the *filioque* to *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* was given as the major reason for the writs.<sup>281</sup>

The Western churches denied the theological questions of ontology that the Eastern churches presented, namely that the Holy Spirit processing from the Father and the Son presented a double ground of being within the Godhead. The East believed that the power to generate the Son was the Father’s alone, as well as the power to process the Spirit. In Eastern thinking the Son could not usurp the Father’s power to process the Spirit for the Holy Spirit would arise from two different beings. At the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, a statement was constructed to answer the East “that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one principle; not by two spirations, but by a single spiration.” The Eastern churches answered by saying that even if the double procession was acceptable as a doctrine of the church it had no place in the *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 435.

<sup>282</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 415.

Augustine's ideas were used to construct what became known as *The Athanasian Creed*. This Latin creed was credited to the Greek church-father Athanasius, but passages from the creed hold important similarities with Augustine's writing, especially *On the Trinity*. The creed confessed that "Now this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity." Followers of Augustine put the creed together within two centuries of his death.<sup>283</sup> *The Athanasian Creed* did not draw directly on *The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*, but included the double procession by saying "The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son [*a Patre et Filio*], not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. *The Athanasian Creed* was accepted by the Protestant churches of the Reformation as a central confession of the faith, along with *The Western Recension of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*, and *The Apostles' Creed*.

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<sup>283</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 435-436.

## Conclusion

Contemporary thought has begun to view metaphor not just as a function of poetry or language with deep imagery such as parables, but as a characteristic of ordinary speech. Many metaphors of common speech are grounded in the human experience of the body. Eve Sweetser has examined Indo-European languages to correlate a consistent usage of the concepts of the body to represent abstractions. She has found that in many different languages, the concept of knowledge is consistently spoken of as “seeing.” These metaphorical correlations are based on the physical basis of how knowledge is commonly used. For example, one does not smell knowledge but the physical means of acquiring and grasping knowledge is through the eyes. “We are intuitively certain that the choice is not random, that “to see” is a well-motivated choice for extension to the sense of knowledge.”<sup>284</sup> Sweetser draws direct parallels between the physical characteristics, actions, or capabilities and the abstractions that correlate to these bodily functions. Language followed bodily usage, because we are embodied beings. The function of language is mind as body.<sup>285</sup>

Bodily experience stands behind much of our abstract thinking. We often impose space on abstract ideas. Humans are most familiar with the space of their bodies, so humans map or locate in the different parts of the body their internal feelings, emotional states, and abstract qualities. Lakoff and Johnson wrote “Spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience; they are not randomly assigned.”<sup>286</sup> For

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<sup>284</sup> Eve Sweetser, *From etymology to pragmatics: metaphorical and cultural aspects semantic structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5-6.

<sup>285</sup> Because we are embodied beings, things that society has taken to be normal concepts are often based on a relationship between our thought and some physical aspect of our being. The system of numbers based on the number ten was not arbitrary, but it was derived from the number of fingers on one human’s hands.

<sup>286</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 18.

instance, we map our heart as the location of our emotions by saying the heart is the *center* of our emotions. In reality, the heart is not the place that emotions arise in the body. The heart as the center of our emotions has become a metaphor. This word usage arose because the blood pumps stronger when we experience a broad spectrum of emotions from fear to love. We have a physical reaction to emotion that causes changes of the heart. We have mapped emotions in the heart. When we desire to express love, we say he/she made my heart go pitter, patter.

“Sitting at the right hand” contained several linguistic concepts that were understood as metaphors of basic speech. The words can be seen as concrete physicality or as physical metaphors. The physical metaphors contained in the above phrase are “sitting,” “right,” and “hand.” These words are often accompanied with the metaphor of “exaltation,” as in the phrase “being therefore exalted at the right hand” (Acts 3:33).

The “hand” became a metaphor for power and strength in Hebrew. Logic tells us that the hand was the source of physical ability, so that the strength of a warrior or craftsman lay in his hand. Psalm 76:6(5) described warriors whose strength had diminished by saying “none of the men of might have found their hands.” Joshua 8:20 literally says “there was not in them the hands to flee.” By interpreting the metaphor, the sentence reads “there was not in them the strength to flee.” The metaphor for the hand as power was so strong that even inanimate objects had hands. The hands were not literal hands, but metaphorical hands meant only as a description of power. Isaiah 47:14 used the following sentence - they cannot deliver themselves “from the power of the flame.” The power of the flame was literally written as “the hand of the flame.” Psalm 141:9 uses the metaphor “the hand of the trap,” to mean the power of the trap. To give a

person or nation into a person or nation's hand (אֶל-יָד) meant the person or nation was given into the power of another. The phrase used for divine warfare was "give into your hand" (נָבַר בַּיּוֹד): "I will give the Philistine into your hand" (1 Sam 23:4). This phrase was used 134 times in the Hebrew Bible to describe God's participation in the warfare of Israel.

The divine hand was the metaphor for God's strength at work in the world. In more than 200 places in the Hebrew Bible, God's hand was the mechanism for God's activity within creation. We understand that work is done by the hand. The nose or the ear is incapable of labor, so the hand became the metaphor for work and strength. Yahweh released the captives from bondage in Egypt with his hand (Exod 3:19, 20; 14:31; Deut 3:24; 5:15). God guided and protected with his hand (Pss 78:72; 17:7; 139:10; Isa 49:2). God created with the divine hand (Isa 48:13; Job 14:15). A prophet spoke of God's hand upon them when they were having a prophetic vision (2 Kgs 3:15; Isa 8:11; Ezek 3:22). If God or the Angel of God stretched out the hand, it was a judgment against people as in Exodus 15:12: "You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them" (also 2 Sam 24:15; 1 Chr 21:16; Is 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4).<sup>287</sup>

The Hebrew verb to sit (בָּשָׁר) began with the concrete meaning of the human physical action of taking a seat. Sweetser observed "that meaning more frequently moves from concrete to abstraction."<sup>288</sup> In Hebrew sitting became a metaphor for dwelling. Though dwelling is not a complete abstraction, it takes more definition than sitting. For

<sup>287</sup> Hebrew society was a very tactile society. The verb to know (יִדּוּ) was linked with the word for hand (יָד). In English knowledge is grasped: "I have grasped the mathematical concepts." In Hebrew to know must have originally come from the idea of using the hand to touch something to comprehend it. When the hand of God falls upon the Prophets not only does God know the Prophets, but God communicates something to Prophets to make the divine intentions known to Israel (Ezek 3:14; 3:22; 8:1-3; 37:1; Jer 1:9).

<sup>288</sup> Eve Sweetser, *From etymology to pragmatics: metaphorical and cultural aspects semantic structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 25.

example, if I have more than one house in which one do I dwell or if I am visiting a friend for an extended period of time do I dwell with the friend or at my own residence. This metaphor of sitting for dwelling was never used in English. When a person took a seated position they were no longer able to move from their basic location. They had settled. In Hebrew “to sit” became a metaphor first for remaining, or tarrying (Gen 24:55; 2 Sam 16:8) and finally if one remained long enough they came to live in a location (Gen 4:16; Josh 20:6). So the physical act of sitting became an accepted Hebrew metaphor for dwelling in a house, a city, or a country. Additionally “to sit” came to mean enthronement (Pss 29:10; 55: 19; 102: 13; Lam 5:19; Mal 3:3). Merely by saying “sit here,” we have described enthronement. The seated position was the accepted pose for judging, the posture of making decisions. To sit when others had to stand gave the seated person a position of comfort and ease, but also the only one sitting stood out as the favored individual, the one granted the authority to make judgments:

““Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?” Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God.”” (Exod 18:14b-16)

Hebrew (Gen 28:17-20; 1 Kgs 2:19; Ps 45.9) and Greek (Gal 2:9) understood the right as the direction of honor and preference. The abstract qualities of honor and goodness were mapped in the body on the right side, because that side is usually more skilled and dexterous. Our right side may have become more capable through training, but it is the side which, for most people, is able to respond accurately to our desired tasks. The metaphor for goodness and honor on the right would have arisen because the right was good to the individual, always responding when needed. Thus the right hand was

honored because of its dependability and dexterity. Most people do not have the controlled precision in their left hand. We might say that the left hand deceives us when we have a detailed task to accomplish. Perhaps this is why the left hand was mapped with the abstraction of duplicity and deceit. The left hand as a metaphor for treachery and deceit can be found in Judges 3:21 and 2 Samuel 20:9-10.

We also use our eyes that look out to the space around us to map that space with abstract thought. “Up” is the direction of several metaphors. “Up” is the metaphor for authority or control, while “down” is the metaphor for subjection. In English, overseeing is accomplished by the person who supervises others.<sup>289</sup> The position of height is the position of authority and rule in Hebrew also. David’s throne sat on a platform of six steps (1 Kgs 10:19). God and Israel’s kings were high, exalted (גָּדוֹל). Psalm 138:6 preserved the height of God in relationship to the lowliness of humanity: “For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly.” “Up” is also the direction of wellbeing and life, while “down” with its association with the grave is the direction of illness and death. Virtue is up and depravity is down.<sup>290</sup> In English we say the woman is high-minded, when describing a person with good morals. With up being the direction of authority, life, and virtue we can understand why God resides in the heavens. Exaltation takes on the metaphorical meaning of superiority, authority, virtue, and life. To have life after death, to take on authority, to be rewarded for earthly virtue, Christ would rise in the resurrection, being exalted above the earth.

The translators of the Septuagint did not believe that God had a body. They also

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<sup>289</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>290</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 15-16.

felt the audience for the Septuagint believe that God was not embodied. Because the writers of the Septuagint wanted to rid their translation of divine corporal elements, they often translated the metaphorical meaning for the mention any of God's body. The intention was to correct the divine anthropomorphism of the original Hebrew. The Septuagint took "he who sits in the heaven" (Ps 2:4) and translated it "he who dwells in the heavens." "Yahweh seated from the beginning" in the Hebrew (Ps 55:20) became "he that was from eternity" in the Septuagint (Ps 54:19). "The hand of Yahweh" in the Hebrew of Joshua 4:24 became "the power of the Lord" in the Septuagint.

When the Bible speaks of the exaltation of Jesus, they are speaking of Jesus now given life and authority. These meanings come from the metaphors of the word "exaltation" or rising up to great height. Jesus received in his exaltation the greatest height imaginable, directly to the right hand of God. This would be considered the highest of the high. This authority was described in the new titles given at Jesus' exaltation. These titles were Lord (Phil 2:9-11) and Messiah (Acts 2:36), Leader and Savior (Acts 5:31), and Son of God in power (Rom 1:4; Acts 13:33). Up is the place of life, which Christ received in the exaltation (1 Cor 15:20).

Jesus was raised to the hand of God, which metaphorically was to the power and strength of God. The hand of God was also the source of the prophetic visions and dreams as well as an auditory understanding of the word of God. Jesus sat at the power of God which brought God's influence and causation of things on earth including prophecy. We would then understand that Jesus had the power to influence and cause human and physical manifestations on the earth. This includes the power over the giving of prophecy or the pouring out of the Spirit.

Jesus was raised to the right hand of God. The right was metaphorically the honored side and the good and righteous side. Jesus was honored and vindicated at God's right hand. Jesus also sat at God's goodness. In the exaltation, Jesus was given honor and goodness. Jesus was given the power to honor those on earth who exemplified righteousness. He could also intervene to help them toward righteousness and preferred behavior (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

Jesus sat at the right hand of God. Metaphorically he dwelled with God. By his sitting he became enthroned, which made him the ruler with power over the earth. Not just sitting on his own throne, but Jesus shared God's throne (Heb 8:1). To summarize all these metaphors, at Jesus' exaltation, he dwelled with God, having been honored by God and given God's power.

People of the twenty-first century should not be bound by concrete concepts of the Bible that arose out of thirteenth and fourteenth century B.C.E. Canaanite Mythology. Yahweh seated on a throne arose as Yahweh took over the characteristics of the seated El. To describe God as a king seated on a throne worked for many centuries when human kings in Israel not only looked like the seated Yahweh on a throne but derived their power from God's heavenly kingdom. The kings of Israel were God's representatives on earth, so it was desirable to have God's heavenly kingdom resemble their earthly kingdom. We are not bound by concrete concepts of an enthroned God and Christ. Our understanding does not allow for a concrete heaven that is up, when the universe is known to be surrounded by countless other universes. We no longer need a God seated on a throne, when we have other Biblical images that suit our understanding of God. Some of these texts say that God is "spirit" (John 4:24), "light" (I John 1:5), "love" (I

John 4:16) and “righteousness and peace and joy” (Rom 14:16). We look to the texts that describe the exaltation for the metaphors that still inform and enlighten us about what happened in the exaltation.

## Addendum A

### Glory

The Greek word δόξα is used in the New Testament to mean “divine and heavenly radiance”, “the loftiness and majesty of God” and “even the being of God.” God’s glory, which was expressed as God’s *kabod* in the Old Testament, was the visible form of God. The *kabod* was seen with luminosity. When Moses was forced to wear a veil to mask the glow of his face, he was masking the radiance of God, which had been passed to Moses as he stood in the radiant glow of God’s presence (Exod 34:33-35). Ezekiel drew a picture of God’s *kabod* by using the words “fire,” “gleaming amber,” and “splendor all around,” but these are words that come from nature to approximate what no human words can describe. Ezekiel wanted us to know that he explained something beyond human comprehension by saying “what appeared like,” “what looked like” (Ezek 1:26-28). The luminous quality was expressed through fire and gleaming amber as though God’s nature was as light. God’s *kabod* also spoke of God’s inherent nature of honor, and holiness. Consistently humans are asked to give God *kabod* (Jer 13:16; Pss 29:1, 115:1), which is to give God honor, respect, and praise. The Septuagint translated כבוד with δόξα. The Septuagint translators took a word that in general usage meant opinion and used it for the nature and being of God. This would have ramifications for the New Testament authors that would continue to use the word δόξα for luminous nature of God and also the honor given to God.

The New Testament portrayed God’s light, when Luke wrote God’s glory shone around the shepherds at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:9). I John directly claimed that God was light (1 John 1:5). The Johannine literature would also claim that Jesus was the light

(John 1:9). This parallel nature for both God and Christ could be made for in John's Gospel Jesus declared that "the Father and I are one" (John 10:30). Glory can be understood as the light of heaven, for where God is there is light. With his exaltation Jesus is now the "Lord of Glory" (1 Cor 2:8) or ruler of the heaven.

Two texts of the New Testament parallel light and glory. In the Simeon's comments about Jesus at the presentation in the temple he said "For my eyes have seen your salvation ... a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:30, 32). The gift of Jesus' salvation is both light and glory. In Matthew 5:16, part of Jesus' sermon on the Mount, Jesus asked those gathered to let their light shine before others, in order to cause others to give glory to God. The work which Christ asked people to do was to be done as honor to God, which was light. The shining was allowing the work to be visible to others, for others to see your work as honoring God and through this to honor God themselves.

The exaltation is always accompanied with glory. Jesus ascended to God where God gave him glory (1 Pet 1:21b), which can be understood as God giving Jesus honor and as giving Jesus more of God's nature. In Romans 6:4 Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father. In Romans Paul seemed to return to the Old Testament idea of the kabod of God, the visible power of God to raise Jesus.

## Addendum B

### **The Role of Mary as Mediator Who Stands at Christ's Right Hand**

The quality of Christ's ability to protect and guide humanity from his position at the right hand of God began to be lost over time. Christ seemed more cut off and distant. He became the stern judge, not the kind protector who had sent the Holy Spirit to aid and guide humanity. Mary assumed the role of the human loving mother raised to the position of the Queen of Heaven with her bodily assumption. The prayers were no longer addressed directly to the Son or Father but to the Virgin, who sent the message on with an understanding of the human situation that the divine could not give. She became the mediator for her now divine son.<sup>291</sup>

Mary stood at Christ's right hand in heaven (Psalm 45:9). This placed her in the position of direct access to her son, where she can practice her maternal role of intercessor and advisor. In heaven, she completed the family of Father, Son, and Mother, but also she assumed the position known to medieval monarchies as the Queen Mother who was the power behind the throne.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 154. Note 257 Quotes Ildefonsus of Toledo: "I pray thee, I pray thee, O holy virgin that I may have Jesus by the same Spirit by whom thou didst give birth to Jesus." This makes Mary the mediator for the Spirit as well as Jesus.

<sup>292</sup> Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1976) 288.

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